

MANIMAHESH
A Journal of Himalayan Studies

December, 2014

Volume V
ISSN-2394-1804



Himachal State Museum Shimla
(Department of Language and Culture, Himachal Pradesh)

**Manimahesh
Journal of Himalayan Studies
(Volume-V)**

**Patron
Additional Chief Secretary (LAC) to the
Government of Himachal Pradesh**

**Director
Department of Language and Culture
Himachal Pradesh, Shimla**

**Editors
M.S. Negi,
Curator, Himachal State Museum, Shimla**

**Dr. Hari Chauhan
Registering Officer (Antiquities)
Himachal Pradesh, Shimla**

**Himachal State Museum, Shimla
(Department of Language and Culture, Himachal Pradesh)**

Published in December, 2014
Himachal State Museum, Shimla
(Department of Language and Culture, Himachal Pradesh)

Website: www.himachalstatemuseum.in

Email: statemuseumshimla@yahoo.com

Ph.0177-2805044

© Himachal State Museum, Chaura Maidan Shimla-171004

Cover page: Mahishasurmardini, 8th Century A.D., Rohru, Shimla

Back page: Tabo Monastery, 10th century AD

Price: Rs. 250-00

Printed at: - H.P. State Coop. Dev. Fed. Printing Press, Shimla-4

CONTENTS

1.	A report on the shell objects from Malari (Utarkhand), Ropa, and Lippa (Himachal Pradesh).	Dr.Arati Deshpande-Mukherjee	1-9
2.	Kangling, the 'spirit evoking' trumpet: A ritual object of Tantric Buddhism	Dr. Veena Mushrif-Tripathy	10-17
3.	Kibber Lhakang-Gang-Spiti, Himachal Pradesh	Michael Dowad, Tsering Norbu, Sonam Angdui, Amchi Ngawang Tsering	11-23
4.	Spiti Valley- A Preliminary Archaeological Investigation	Dr. Hari Chauhan, Michael Dowad, Tsering Norbu	24-31
5.	Note on Conservation Problems in Monuments located in Spiti with special reference to Buddhist Monasteries at Tabo in Himachal Pradesh	C. Dorje	32-35
6.	From Aśoka to His Holiness, the XIV Dalai Lama: Buddhism vis-à-vis Tibet in archaeology, traditions, and sociology of Uttarakhand Himalaya, India	Maheshwar P. Joshi.	36-55
7.	A Rare Image of Mahishāsūramardīnī from Bachoonch, Himachal Pradesh	Prof. Devendra Handa	56-63
8.	Matsya Avatāra – The Fish Incarnation of Vishṇu: Observations on Some Stone Images from Chamba, Himachal Pradesh	Prof. Ashvini Agrawal	64-71
9.	An Addorsed Image from State Museum Shimla: A Re-appraisal	Amit Sharma	72-78

A report on the shell objects from Malari (Utarkhand), Ropa, and Lippa (Himachal Pradesh).

Dr. Arati Deshpande-Mukherjee*

This is a report on the shell objects from the sites of Malari, Ropa, and Lippa entrusted by the Dept of Archaeology, H.N.B.G. University, Srinagar for a detailed study. These were studied at the Archaeozoology Laboratory, Deccan College PGRI Pune. The study involved both macro and micro level examination. The latter was carried out by examining under a portable Dinolight microscope for studying the structure, use wear marks, weathering etc. on the beads. With this it was possible to identify the raw material as that of molluscan shell and not talc or limestone.

A. Malari

From Malari two objects were studied. Malari is a small village situated at an altitude of 3500 mtr. (30-41'10.07"N 79-53'24.5"E) in the Nitti valley in Chamoli district Uttarakhand, 63 kms from Joshimath near the Indo- Tibetan boarder. On the basis of earlier finding of burial site in Malari, the valley was explored to understand the spread and distribution of burial sites in the Nitti valley. S.P. Dabral (1968) was the first historian, who had found a human skeleton along with pots at Malari. Following this report, an extensive archaeological investigation was done (1986, 2000, and 2001) by Department of Archaeology H.N.B.G. University wherein the burial site of Malari was found. Malari was the first cave burial site found in Garhwal high Himalaya which gave a new insight to archaeological studies in this region. From this site along with human remains spouted red and black pottery, gold mask, gold pendent, iron tools and a complete animal skeleton remain of Zoba (a cross breed of yak and Cattle) were recovered. Since then more caves have been discovered by researchers from the department of Archaeology Garhwal University (Prof. Nautiyal pers.comm). Described below are two objects made from shell.

1. One flat circular object having a diameter of 3.83cm and thickness of .65 cm. context unknown. It has a central perforation. The object is made from the outer shell whorl of *T.pyrum* shell and is weathered Fig. 1 a & b.



Fig. 1a



Fig. 1b

2. A rectangular object probably a shell bangle fragment having two lines engraved parallel to each other on its one surface while the other is plain. There are 4 holes two on either side and a hole in the centre. This is also made using *T.pyrum* shell and exhibits fine craftsmanship.



Fig. 2a



Fig. 2b

Objects from Lippa

Locality/Region : Morang Tehsil
District : Kinnaur
State : Himachal Pradesh

31° 39.565 North latitudes and 78° 22.988 East longitudes (8908 ft. MSL)-

Based on the exploration in 2012-13, excavation at Lippa was jointly carried out by of Dept. of Archaeology, H.N.B.G. University, Srinagar with the Himachal State Museum, Shimla in June 2014 for 3 weeks). The entire area covering around 10 sq km was surveyed using Total Station for the first time to generate the topographical map of Lippa through the application of Autocad and Archaeo CAD.

The excavation was conducted in the heart of the village and a vertical trench measuring 2m x2m was laid in eastwest direction. The excavation was difficult to conduct as the site almost fell over the pathway which is used by villagers to approach their houses. A double cist burial was excavated at the depth of 1.5meter. The upper cist burial is almost semi-circular in shape measuring 41cm long and 52 cm wide oriented towards south- east direction was found partially damaged due to the construction of road. It yielded only few highly damaged disarticulated bones inside the cist. Interestingly a rectangular cist burial oriented towards the same direction was found intact just below the upper semi circular cist, however the bones found inside the cist were also highly degenerated because of the water seepage from surrounding area and road construction. The funerary material include a copper bowl and two perforated beads on turquoise and highly polished agate. These beads are very

important finds from Lippa. At the present stage of knowledge it may be said that the beads are not of local origin and therefore might have reached from outside as result of some trade activity. From Lippa the findings of a large number of steatite, a few marine shell beads with perforation, and human bones are most noteworthy (Prof.Nautiyal pers.comm). Described below are the shell objects .

1. One small flat circular disc having a diameter of 19.83mm with a central perforation and quite weathered was found on the surface 3 meters below from the burial site. (Fig.1.a) . It has a perforation in the centre which is quite big and has been done by drilling. The object has been made using the outer shell of *Turbinella pyrum* . These are mostly large shells but here fragment from the spire portion of a small sized shell has been used. On its inner side the junction of the spire and main shell whorl is visible in Fig.1b & c. This feature has been used to identify the shell as that of *Turbinella pyrum*.



Fig. 1a

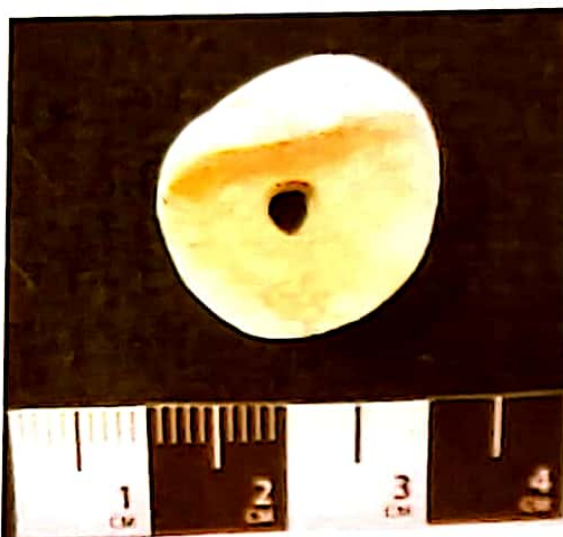


Fig. 1b



Fig. 1c

Lippa Bead 2

Fig. 2a is of a circular disc having a diameter of 22.18 mm, a width of 3.5 mm, with a perforation which is slightly offcenter. This object was also made using a fragment from the spire part of the *Turbinella pyrum* shell and the perforation was made by drilling (Fig.2b). The specimen is weathered and has pit marks on its surface (Fig.2a). These were present on the shell prior to bead manufacture. In their natural habitat when living in the intertidal zone, *Turbinella pyrum* shells are often attacked by boring *Cliona* sponge for their calcium carbonate due to which the shell's smooth surface gets covered with pores which makes the shell weak and prone to breakage. Hence such shells are generally not preferred for shell working. Here in the case of this object It appears that the shell despite its poor quality was still used to make the object.



Fig. 2a



Fig. 2b

Shell objects from Ropa

Locality/Region : Pooh Tehsil
District : Kinnaur
State : Himachal Pradesh

Lat. 31°47'52.83"N and Long. 78°25'15.20"E 3090 meter)

Ropa (lat. 31°47'52.83"N And long. 78°25'15.20"E) is the last village in the Rupa valley on the bank of the rivulet *Rupagad* at an altitude of 3090 m. MSL in the Pooh sub division of Kinnaur District on the border of Spiti in the west. The *Rupa gad* separates the districts of Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti, and meets the Sutlej river near Shiasu village. Recently a hoard of 18 pots from the cist were discovered by the local farmers on the steep slope of the hill above the village while raising the terraces for apple orchard. It is most noteworthy that these pots were not damaged while removing the capstone but kept safely with them in their small hut near the forest, showing the sheer understanding

of the local people towards the importance of heritage and culture. The pots are large vessels with long neck without handles of grey ware made on wheel and highly fired as the effect of firing is distinctly seen on the surface of the pots. The other pot repertoire also consist of large and small vases and small cups. However another interesting type is a wide mouthed deep vessels with flat base and handles on both sides on the body. Interestingly after examining the pots , a large number of shell beads were also found from one of the pot. (Prof.Nautiyal pers.comm)

The following objects were studied.

1. a thin circular disc with a central perforation done by drilling. It is coated with a reddish patina which needs to be investigated whether it is some pigment coating the surface or it is due to weathering. This is also made from the main whorl of *T.pyrum* shell.

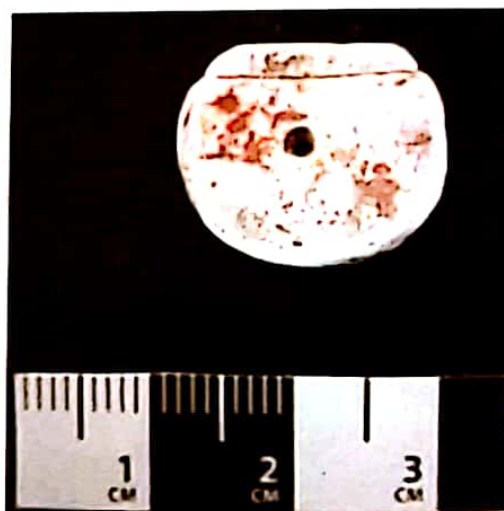


Fig. 1

2. Another thin circular disc with a perforation towards its one end. It also bears a similar reddish patina on its outer surface. This is also made from the spire part of *T.pyrum* shell. On its one side can be seen the internal structure of the shell itself Fig. 2b.

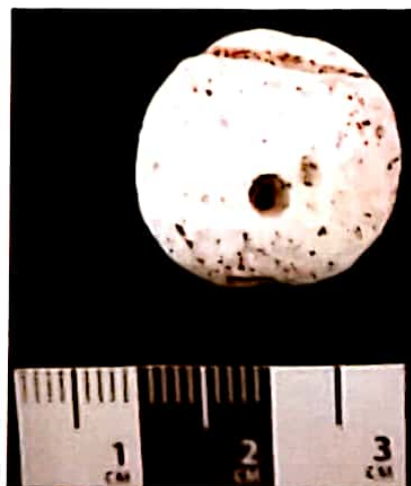


Fig. 2a



Fig. 2b

ROPA SHELL BEADS

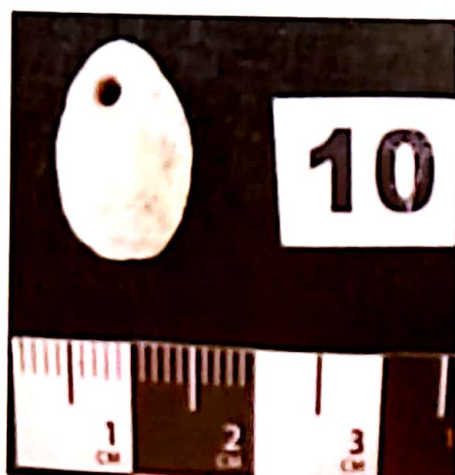
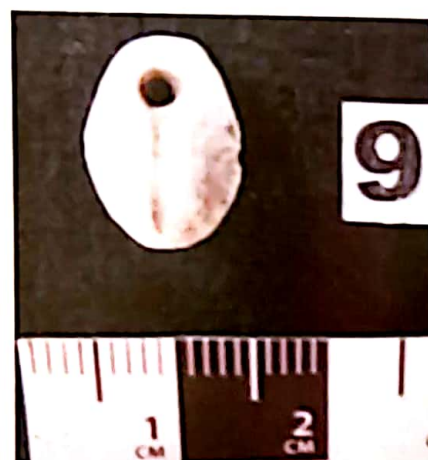
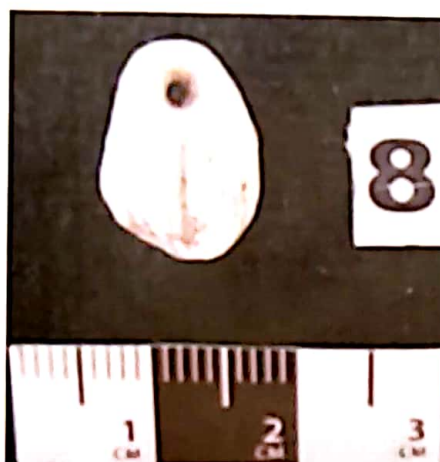
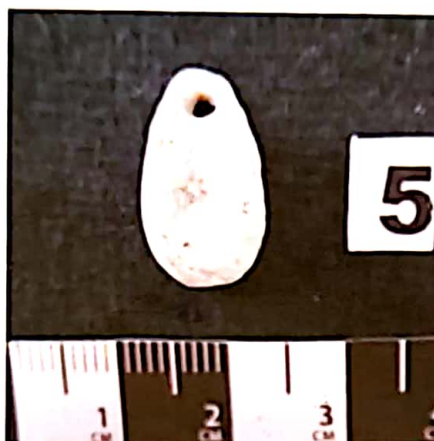
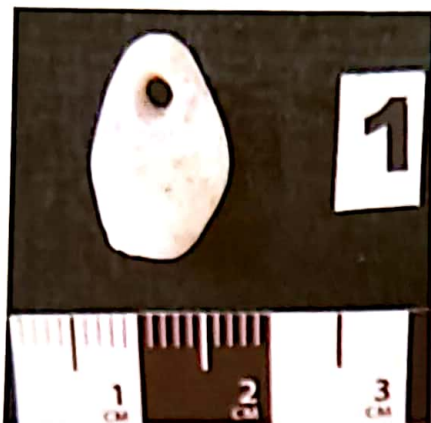


Table 1. Dimensions of the Ropa shell beads

No:	Length mm	Breadth mm
1	16.73	10.23
2	17.28	10.44
3	18.29	10.07
4	18.24	11.46
5	18.87	10.28
6	17.83	10.18
7	15.36	10.90
8	16.24	10.74
9	14.97	9.28
10	15.73	10.70
11	15.53	9.58

A total 13 beads were examined. All are fairly similar to each other occurring in more or less similar shape and size range (Table 1). The beads are oval to egg shaped where one surface is flat and the other bulging. All the beads bear a perforation where the bulging slopes towards the narrow end and appears to have been done by drilling. On the flat side runs a straight deep groove parallel to the length of the bead from the perforation to its margin dividing the bead into two equal halves.

All the beads are made using the shell of the large marine gastropod *Turbinella pyrum*. This has been identified from the fine striations which are seen on the surface which are typically observed in this shell. Probably all these were meant for stringing together. Their exact purpose is difficult to ascertain due to their recovery from a pot. Although the beads show fairly good preservation they have a weathered and a chalky appearance due to exposure to cold weather conditions.

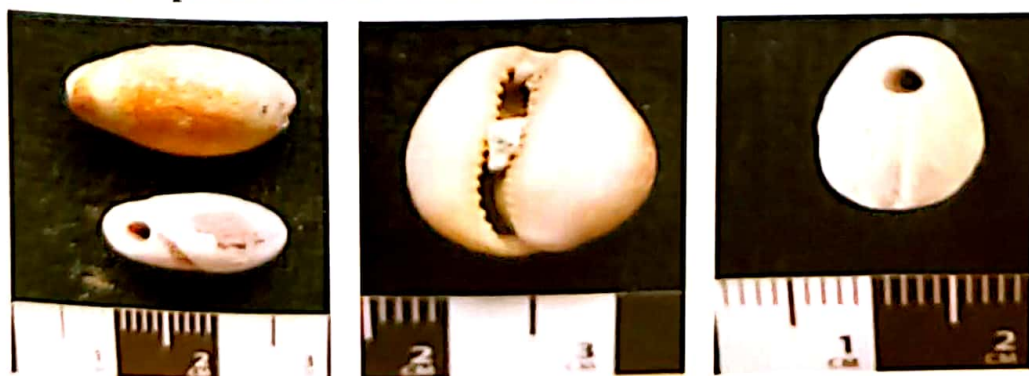


Fig. A. Comparison with a cowry shell, B basal portion of Cowry shell; C. Flat surface with a straight groove

The shell beads recovered from Ropa are an interesting group of beads. Although crudely made their oval egg shape is also quite unique. So far in the Indian archaeological context no such shell beads have been observed. In some ways they also resemble the shape of the cowrie shells. Is it that these were made to look like cowrie shells which were in demand and might not have been easily available?

During the protohistoric and historic period in India, shell of the large marine gastropod *Turbinella pyrum* was the most preferred raw material used in shell working. Mainly used for making bangles, often its resulting shell debitage from shell working was further utilised for making other objects as well such as beads. In the case of the Ropa beads, small shell fragments had been shaped into beads.

Discussion

The recovery of shell objects from Malari, Lippa and Ropa in the higher Himalayas is a very important discovery having significant implications for studying ancient human societies inhabiting high altitude areas like the Himalayas. This is probably the first time such findings have been reported from this region. All the objects examined are made from *Turbinella pyrum* a marine shell which is not locally available but is found to inhabit specific areas namely the Gulf of Kachhh and Gulf of Mannar and Palk bay in the South. This makes the objects all the more significant for understanding complex trade networks through which these had been sourced, circulated and used in this region. It is quite likely by having access to the *T. pyrum* shell, the objects were locally produced using simple shell working techniques like drilling, grinding, abrading, etc. Further the association of these shell objects with human burials is also an important finding it in a way reflects their socio-religious significance as well as their status as items of prestige, status, etc. However in the absence of chornology for these sites it is difficult to establish their antiquity. Probably excavations in the future could yield clues for this aspect.

Ethnographic accounts have shown the prevalence of the custom of using *Turbinella pyrum* objects in Nagaland as early as the 19 th century by the various tribes like the Ao, Angami, Konyaks, etc. (Hutton 1921). Even today *T. pyrum* shell fragments are taken from the shell cutting workshops in West Bengal to Nagaland for making into objects by the Nagas. The recovery of small circular discs made from *T. pyrum* shell from Lippa and Ropa are also interesting. Perforated circular disks with decorations made from *T.pyrum* shell have been reported from some of the megalithic sites in Tamil Nadu such as Sanur. Slightly larger ones are still used as ear and neck ornaments by the Nagas. In Tibet too the custom of using shell beads with coral and turquoise still persists. Looking at the present day use of small shell beads, discs by

some of the hill communities in the Himalayas It is very likely that similar might have been the case in the past too where some amount of shell working had been carried out. Till date unlike the rest of the subcontinent which has large-scale evidence for *T.pyrum* shell use since the Harappan times there has been negligible reporting from the Himalayan region. However as no substantial evidence for this aspect is available more detailed investigations of these shell objects as well as their recovery from stratified context in the future is required. This would help trace the antiquity of their use and would also throw light on their users.

Kangling, the 'spirit evoking' trumpet: A ritual object of Tantric Buddhism

Veena Mushrif-Tripathy*

"You have to use the sound of instrument to call spirit" this is what Kalzang Nima Lama from Village Lippa, Dist. Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh said in the beginning of the interview. The name of the instrument is kangling. I saw this instrument in village Asarang, some 10 km from Lippa, aroused my interest in Buddhist tradition using human bones in worship. Using human skeletal remains in worship is not unknown or uncommon phenomena in the tantric rituals and it is also seen in almost all religions. Kangling is the instrument made of human thigh bone, femur (Tibetan: kang = leg, ling = flute), it is a musical instrument with very special qualities.



Kangling from
Village Asang

Kangling in Asrang Village

It creates wailing, eerie sound, which creates atmosphere suitable for the Chod ritual. In chöd, kangling is to be blown three times to summon demons to ritual feast. It is part of an ensemble of sacred instruments that emerged from the tantric crucible of India some fifteen hundred years ago. (www.damaruworks.com/bone/acquiring-bone).

Chod is believed to have originated from the Bon religion in Tibet (Zanzibar Trading 2010) as a result of the shamanistic rituals and exorcisms. It may contain slightly less than mainstream Buddhist ideas, but it does incorporate both the ideas of tantra and sutra. With the Chod rituals, practitioners make use of the kangling (thigh bone trumpet),

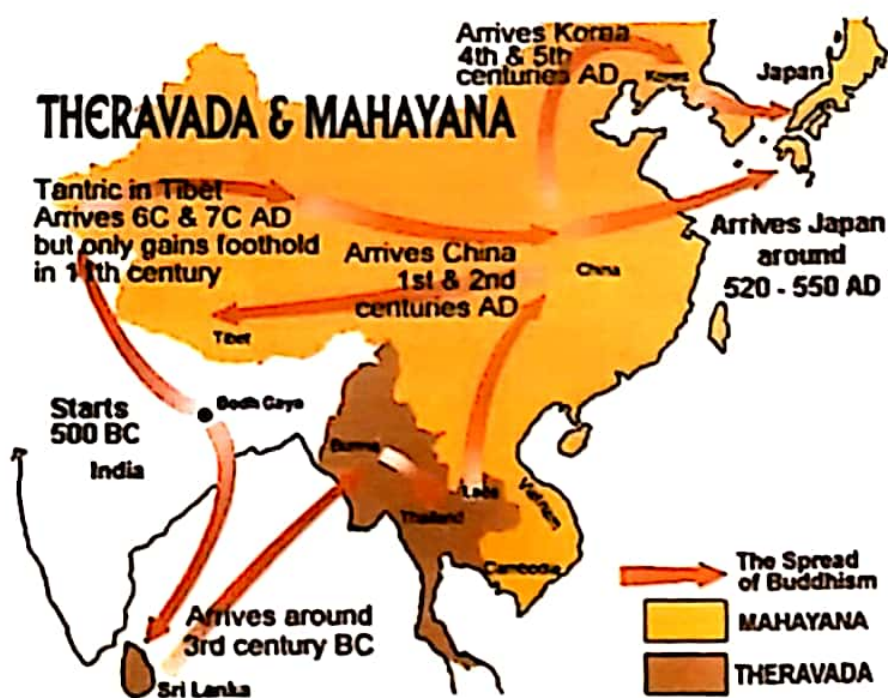
*Associate Professor, Deccan College Pune- 411 006

bell, and the damaru (skull cap drum) (School of Tibetan Healing Cho 2010). The kangling is not only made with human bone but the lower part also is supposed to be encased in human skin. In demon summoning, the lama should eat part of the skin for the trumpet blast to be powerful enough. In death rituals, the lama walks before the corpse on the way to burial or cremation. The instrument is supposed to attract and guide the soul in the right direction. (Wright 1904)

The skull cups (kapala) are used as libation bowls in certain Tantric rituals, where unverified rumors say spiritual leaders drink blood from the cup (Lyons 1982). In addition, the previous owners of the bones also add to the mystical powers or ritual potency within the instruments. For craniums, the greatest tantric power comes from the skull of a murder or execution victim; those dying violent deaths or illness also possess power but not as strong. Skulls of children born out of wedlock or incest, especially, are considered to contain much potency. This aspect arises from the Indian practice since they also use skulls of children born out of the forbidden union of castes (Religion Facts 2004-2010). In Tantric Buddhism, when meditating on fierce deities or dharma protectors, lamas or other practitioners or a higher level use instruments fashioned from bone or shaped like skulls (Kumar 2004). Despite macabre qualities of this practice, it is used for remembering fragile nature of human mortality. The use of human bones, their use is not supposed to be a morbid fixation on death but a strict reminder to live your life wisely and to the fullest. It is interesting to know the spread of tantric buddism in Himachal Pradesh and Tibet.

Major branches or schools of Buddhism:

As it is mentioned in the book 'Introduction of Tibetan Buddhism" (2012, pages 68-69) by G. Samuel, regional variety of Buddhism can be seen in regions of Asia today and can be classified according to three main areas. These are known as Theravāda, Mahayana and Vajrayana and/or simply refer as Southern, Eastern and Northern. In the Southern region, which includes the



Map showing spread of three branches of Buddhism

Southeast Asian Buddhist traditions (Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia) and the Buddhists of Sri Lanka, Mahayana and Tantric practices were progressively marginalized or even prohibited, although they continued to have a strong influence on popular and esoteric versions of Buddhist practice in many of these countries. Official Buddhism today in the Southern Buddhist countries belongs to the Theraváda school, and claims to represent an original' (pre-Maháyána and pre-Tantric) version of the Buddhist teachings. The Buddhist texts here are taught and practised in the Pali language, an ancient Indian language closely related to Sanskrit. Presently Buddhism has represented in India as a small community.

The Eastern region of the contemporary Buddhist world consists of China and the other regions that have formed part of the Chinese cultural world, including Taiwan, Korea, Vietnam, and Japan. Buddhism here was transmitted through the Chinese language, and eventually onwards into other regional languages. In the process it became deeply engaged with East Asian spiritual traditions, including Confucianism and particularly Daoism. Both Maháyána and Tantra were transmitted to East Asia, but for the most part this consisted only of the earlier stages of Tantra (Kriyá, Caryá, some early Yoga Tantra). Tantric practice still persists, particularly in Japan, but is relatively marginal to East Asian Buddhism, which developed a strong Chinese cultural flavour.

The third category, Vajrayana or Tantrayana, which derives from Mahayana, is the school most closely associated with Tibetan Buddhism. The full range Tantric teachings and practices survived primarily in the Northern region. This includes the Tibetan regions of China, India and Nepal, along with Bhutan and a number of Central Asian regions (Mongolia, including both independent Mongolia and the Mongolian regions of the People's Republic of China, as well as Tuva and Buryatia). Here Buddhism was translated into Tibetan, and later on into Mongolian, languages, and went through a process of indigenization (Plate 2).

Vajrayana School, Tantric Buddhism:

The last of the three main schools of Buddhism, Vajrayana traditions developed around 500 AD out of Mahayana teachings from northwest India. The concepts and practices of tantrism originated in India and are associated with Shaivism, the cult of Shiva, the god of Yogins. It was from Indian sources that Mahayanists absorbed this movement, and these two schools are exemplified in the great Lo Monthang gompas: Mahayana in Thubchen, and Vajrayana in Jampa. Vajra in Sanskrit means diamond (lit. adamantine, unsplittable), while yana means vehicle. Vajrayana is thus translated as "Diamond Vehicle." In English it is also known as Tantric Buddhism or Esoteric Buddhism, due to its reliance on sacred texts called tantras. From India it spread to Tibet

and China with only brief success (but centuries later takes strong root in Tibet). The Vajrayana (Adamantine Way) adds to Theravada and Mahayana the knowledges and practices of tantra, aimed at speedy and efficacious transcendence through unorthodox means.

As for the history of Tibet's experience with Buddhism, Buddhism originated in India during the fifth and sixth centuries and later spread to Tibet by the seventh century. (Lieberman 2003) Buddhism actually arrived in Tibet in two waves; the first wave was during the reign of King Songtsen Gampo in 641 AD. The King himself was converted by his two Buddhist wives from China and Nepal, but the Tibetan people are a fierce people and, likewise, fiercely like keeping their traditions. The king made Buddhism the state religion and established Buddhist temples throughout the region; however, Buddhism did not take root deeply during this time because the indigenous Bon religion was still widely practiced (ReligionFacts2 2004-2010). Bon is essentially the shamanistic practice of the indigenous folk with divination and exorcism as central points. (Lieberman 2003) This mixture currently appears with the additional deities, spirit summoning, and other less than traditional Buddhist concepts within Tibetan Tantric Buddhism.

When Buddhism was introduced into Tibet in the seventh century under King Songtsen Gampo, it was apparently centered in the royal court and did not, at first, put down deep roots. Almost after a century under King Trisong Detsen, who with the aid of Padmasambhava strengthened its position again. But even after that "first diffusion," the new religion lost ground, and it was not until the "second diffusion" of Buddhism in the ninth and tenth centuries that it became firmly and finally established as the majority religion of Tibet. Tibetan Buddhist monastic orders are broadly tolerant of the old practices, some of which have almost no recognizable affinity with Buddhist belief. These native elements, whether they derive from Bon or from a folk religion, were strongly concerned with defence against hostile or ambivalent powers, ensuring that the dead do no harm to the living.

Rites and rituals are an essential part of Tibetan religion and reflect its practical side. Not restricted to temples alone, they are performed in a variety of places and circumstances, for a myriad of purposes. Daily ceremonies are conducted in temples. Throughout the year special rituals are performed to propitiate deities, to precipitate rain, to avert hailstorms, diseases, and death, to ensure good harvests, to exorcise demons and evil spirits, and of course to destroy the passions of the mind and, ultimately, the ego. All these practices-whether occult, magical, or shamanistic, require various implements

which are as important as the images of the deities in whose service they are employed. Each such object is pregnant with symbolic meaning and is frequently imbued with magical power and potency. Many of these ritual implements also occur as hand-held attributes of various important Buddhist deities. Many of these weapons and implements have their origins in the wrathful arena of the battlefield and the funerary realm of the cremation grounds. As primal images of destruction, slaughter, sacrifice, and necromancy, these weapons were wrested from the hands of evil and turned-as symbols-against the ultimate root of evil, the self-cherishing ego. In the hands of wrathful and semi-wrathful deities, protective deities, the siddhas and the dakinis, these implements became pure symbols, weapons of transformation, and an expression of the deities' wrathful compassion, which mercilessly destroys the manifold illusions of the inflated human ego. (Nitin Kumar, <http://www.exoticindia.com>)

The Kangling:

The kangling should only be used in chöd rituals performed outdoors with the chöd damaru and bell. In Tantric chöd practice, the practitioner, motivated by compassion, plays the kangling as a gesture of fearlessness, to summon hungry spirits and demons so that she or he may satisfy their hunger and thereby relieve their sufferings. It is also played as a way of "cutting off of the ego". According to the discussion with the Lama, there are preferences of the procuring bone to use as kangling. The first choice is of the lady who has died during given birth. The bone should be from right side but if it is not possible to get it then any side is fine. Secondly it should belong to a person who was of good character or probably lady with good voice. According to some, perfect specimen would be from a Brahmin child, male or female, free from worldly stains or faults. The bone should be of the person who was not a victim of tuberculosis,

plague or other contagion, or some accident or misfortune. The right leg of someone who died in their youth, with clear mind, is considered a



Kalzang Nima Lama demonstrating Kangling use and old photo of Chodpa with kangling

“Daka kangling” possessing enlightened male energy. The left leg from a similar individual (male or female) is a Dakini kangling, possessing enlightened feminine energy. Other traditions say that a female bone should be from the left side, and a male bone from the right leg. Further, a Daka kangling can be defined as coming from someone killed by a knife or other weapon, while a Dakini kangling is from a woman who was a tantric consort. According to the Mindroling manual of sacred instruments, the left leg of a young male who died by a knife has subtle qualities, while the right femur of a woman in her prime who died similarly is of also of fine quality. Another ideal bone for Chod comes from a monk or nun with unbroken vows. One can also understand that a kangling made from a great saint or enlightened sage would have very unique powers and generate realization in the user, for reasons described further on. Such important relics would naturally be passed down to appropriate heirs or lineage holders.

If one uses the bone of a parent or relative, this accumulates significant merit or positive karma for the deceased in their future lives, though such a specimen would be hard to come by in the modern context. Other Chod traditions describes a kangling from a young mother who has died in childbirth, but whose child lived as being extremely auspicious; The energy of the such a bone would be suffused with thoughts of deep, one-pointed love and sacrifice for the child. Others maintain that, regardless of all the above considerations, whether for anatomical or spiritual reasons, a female bone produces a clearer sound. Without all these special characteristics, in general the femur should at least come from a person age 16-60, originating in a “pure” cemetery. Of course, today it is quite rare to know the origin or history of the kangling and its former owner.

The bone treatment:

By now it is very clear that the kangling is made of human thigh bone. The femur is cut just below the greater trochanter at proximal side and at the condylar portion on distal side two holes are made to pass the wind and create a sound. Then bone is coated from the inside of the shaft with linseed oil or wax. Apparently this is meant to protect it. Block the hip-end opening with a tampon, and pour the oil or hot liquid wax into the nostrils using a funnel. Dump out the oil; or, heat the knitting needle and push it through the wax to make a new channel. The



Kangling without any covering with close up blowing part and two holes at the end

bone is sometime covered with metal from outside to protect it. It is not necessary to cover it but it helps to save it from breaking. The kind of metal to be used is depended on the individual and economical condition. It can be copper, silver or gold.

Traditionally the process of obtaining the kapala (skull cups) and human thigh bone Kangling trumpet proceeds in a complex and time-consuming process. First, the head and the thigh bone of the corpse are extracted and then being immersed carefully in a select marshy land area for over 3 to 6 months. It is then exhumed, ensuring that all fleshy portions are completely separated. Any of the local lay monks (ngakpas) can perform the art of separating the skull (Thopa or Kapala) from the head portion and sizing down the thigh bones for kangling. It is then cooked and boiled thoroughly for several days until all the fat content has been removed. Then the final stage of cleansing, using sacred, blessed water (amrita or dutsi) and then polishing with baked river sand is performed. This painstaking procedure preserves the original colour and all the internal architecture of the kapala skull cup (http://www.chinabuddhismencyclopedia.com/en/index.php?title=The_human_skull_cup).



Metal Kangling with dragon as a motif
(a : complete kangling b: close up of motifs)

At some kangling if the condylar or distal portion is broken or deliberately cut then it is covered with the designed resembling the dragon (Plate 4). Presently it is very difficult to obtain the original and old specimen to use as a kangling, so many lamas use the kanling or instrument made by metal or wood (Plate 5). Some time they use animal femur bone instead of human.

To sum up, it is intriguing instrument and different ways of performing puja. Presently archaeological explorations are going on the region close to Tibet which is called as trance Himalayan region. There are many monasteries and people tell that it is very old tradition and has come from the Tibet.

Note:

The present article is based on the field visit of the author in May 2014. The other explanations are incorporated from different websites with references below.

References:

- Coster, Kathryn, "Tibetan Tantric Buddhism: Envisioning Death" (2010). *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection*. Paper 917. http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/917
- Kumar, Nitin. 2004. "Ritual Implements in Tibetan Buddhism: A Symbolic Appraisal." Kheper. Retrieved November 14, 2010(<http://www.kheper.net/topics/Buddhism/ritual.html>).
- Lyons, Elizabeth, Heather Peters and Cheng-Mei Chang. 1985. *Buddhism: History and Diversity of a Great Tradition*. Pennsylvania, USA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Samuel Geoffrey, 2012. *Introducing Tibetan Buddhism*. Routledge: Oxon
- Wright 1904
- Zanzibar Trading 2010
- Wikipedia: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chöd
- Nitin Kumar, <http://www.exoticindia.com>
- <http://asia.library.cornell.edu/ac/bridgingworlds/Spread-of-Buddhism>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Buddhist_sects.png
- www.chinabuddhismencyclopedia.com
- http://www.chinabuddhismencyclopedia.com/en/index.php?title=The_human_skull_cup).

Kibber Lhakhang-Gang Spiti, Himachal Pradesh

Michael Dowad, Tsering Norbu, Sonam Angdui,

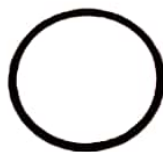
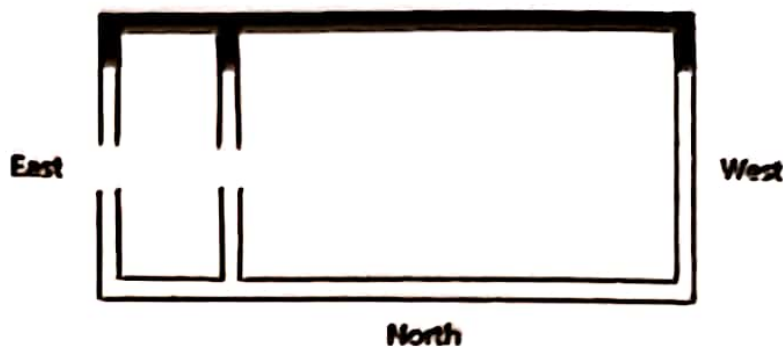
Amchi Ngawang Tsering*

About one half kilometer to the northwest of Kibber village in Spiti, Lahaul-Spiti District, Himachal Pradesh, lies a mound, bearing evidence of what is likely to have been a Buddhist temple before it was destroyed. It has been variously referred to as Lhakhang-Gang, Lha k'an sgan or Lha-bla-mai-dgon-pa. This mound and the ruins are on what were the two main trading routes heading west and north via Kunzum La, and via Parlang La. Seven Km to the southeast is Kee Monastery. It has been suggested that this temple was founded during the 11th century by Lha-bla-ma-ye-shes-'od. It probably came to its end during the invasion of Ladakh and Spiti by Zorawar Singh, when in 1841 Rahim Khan was placed in charge of Spiti. His son-in-law Ghulam Khan "occupied himself in plundering the monasteries and destroying the idols" of Spiti.¹

The site was visited by many scholars. On the way from Kee to Pharlang Pass on August 5, 1909, A.H. Francke observed the following: "...not far from Kyibar (map Kibber), I noticed an ancient ruin of a temple built of sun-dried bricks, its walls sloping inward, as always is the case in Rin-chen-bzang-po's temples. It is called Lha-bla-mai-dgon-pa, and thus by its name it directly points to the great priest-king of Guge, Lha-bla-ma-ye-shes-'od, whose name we had found in an inscription at Poo. Local tradition says that King Lha-bla-ma or, as another man understood it, the gods (lha) and the lamas (blama) built it in one night."²

On July 5, 1933 Giuseppe Tucci visited Kibbar. He wrote: "At 4 p.m. we enter Kibar where we make the twelfth camp at 4020 metres. Probably this country was devastated by Zoravar during his Tibetan expedition. The only really ancient temple has been destroyed; it is situated north-west of the village on a great plain at the extreme limit of the cultivated fields; it is called by the people the Lha k'an sgan and the ruins which remain show a plan exactly like that of the most ancient little chapels in the region, coeval with Rin c'en bzang po the first dynasty of Guge (v. fig. 2)."³

* Kaza, Lahaul-Spiti



A diagram based on Fig. 2 by Tucci.

There are two notes:

- 1) In inscriptions the usual form is *kyi bar*
- 2) Probably that which Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, I, p.46, says went by the name of *Lha bla mai dgon pa*; but of this name, as far as my research has extended, there is not a trace.

O.C. Handa was looking for the ruins when he visited Kibber. He says:

"My interest in going to Kibar was to find out the temple named *Lha-bla-mahi-dgon-pa*, which, though not a Rinchen Sangpo foundation, was contemporaneous with the foundations attributed to him, i.e., of the 11th century (Tabo, p. 68). However, I could not find any standing temple of that age in the village, and the inquiry about such site from the locals proved futile. At last, I met an old local postmaster, Chering Dorje, who told me that there use to be an old *lha-khang* a little way from the village towards the north. He had seen the fragmented walls of that temple in his childhood and had heard a lot about the *lha-khang* from his ancestors. He informed that that *lha-khang* was built by the gods in a single night. That type of popular belief is common with almost all the Rinchen Sangpo foundations, and I found the similar tradition about the Lotsaba *lha-khangs* at Ropa, Poo and elsewhere in Kinnaur.

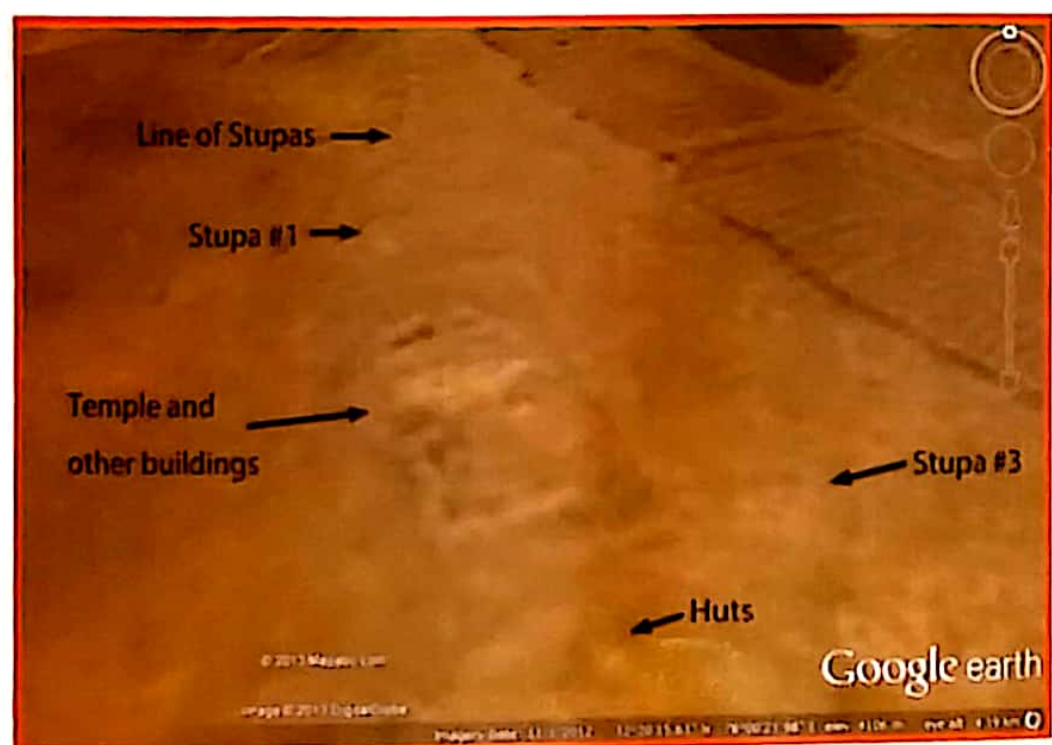
An exploratory visit to that site proved rewarding. That site looked like a local mound, which, in fact, was a heap of clay over the stone pedestal. That might have been a large chorten. Around it, exposed foundations of various temples could be identified over a wide area, which unmistakably indicated existence of a large monastic complex at that site once upon a time. Among the debris, thick and coarse pottery shards, with ochre outer layer and grey inner layer, were also found. These specimens were almost of the same colour, fabric and texture, which I had discovered in the caves at Tabo (Tabo, p 127)."

In another book, Handa mentions the Kibber gompa in a list of sites of religious institutions. After listing the numerous foundations attributed to Rinchen Sangpo, Handa writes:

"Besides these [foundations attributed to Rinchen Sangpo], many temples were built during the early decades of the eleventh century under the architectural pattern of the age. Some of those are: ... (9) Lha-bla-mahi-dgon-pa of sKi-bar or Kibbar in Spiti,..."

The state of the ruins have been steadily declining since then until, in the present 2013, it is difficult for someone unfamiliar with the site to see that what remains was indeed at one time buildings and stupas. The site is clearly visible in Google Earth and Google Maps in Satellite mode, north-northwest of Kibber village about one half kilometer. In Google Earth it can be found at (32°20'16"N, 78°00'22"E).

The original Google Earth image has been cropped on the left, and the text and arrows added. As earth and rocks have been extracted from the site the nature of the markings seen in the image are not always certain.

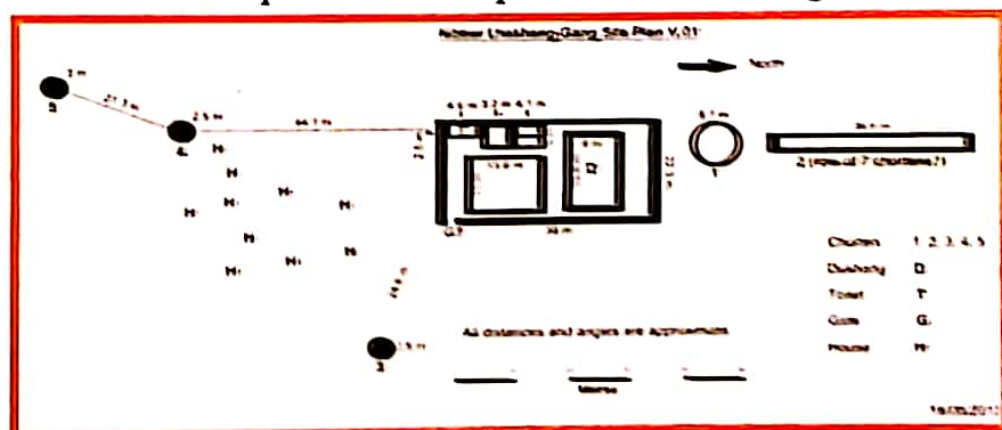


In August, 2013 I along with Tsering Norbu, Sonam Angdui and Kibber's Amchi Ngawang Tsering visited the site. The Amchi has been watching the site deteriorate over the years. The first thing he said when he met the others was "It's a good thing you came now [before everything is gone]." His knowledge of the site and sharp eyes were of great help. We had brought with us a simple compass and a long measuring tape. As true north is not far from magnetic north at this location, and the error using the compass was of similar magnitude, we took magnetic north as true north for our survey. Our intention was only to do a preliminary survey.

Initially the remains of the walls were hard to discern, but once we got a sense of the layout, the walls were easy to identify. The Amchi in several cases was able to refine our initial observations: a small wall separating one room into two, a gate, stupas. The walls are gone except for a row of rocks where their foundations once were. There are small mounds of earth where the buildings and stupas were. The Amchi said that only a few years ago part of the mud wall was still visible.

We took the measurements and made a preliminary plan of the site. While incomplete and only approximately accurate it should help to estimate what would be involved in doing a proper survey of the site. By our initial estimation, in the main walled enclosure there were two buildings, a small room split in two another with room to the south of this, these two possibly at the bottom of a tower, and a toilet at the southwest corner. In the southeast corner there was possibly for a gate. One question is whether what we identified as the Dukhang (D on the plan) is the same as the temple Tucci discussed (see fig. 2 for Secrets of Tibet).

Remains of several stupas were found, the largest directly to the north of the walled enclosure: Stupa #1. We assumed the line going north from Stupa #1, marked 2 on the plan, was a line of 7 stupas. In Google Maps a line of light colored dots, some with circles around them is seen there. South of the walled enclosure there are remains of about ten huts. Pottery shards are found in and about the site. After the site survey and research made on various aspects the exact plan of the site emerged as below.



References:

1. J. Hutchison and J. Ph. Vogel(1933), History of the Punjab Hill States, p. 487
2. A. H. Francke(. 1914) Antiquities of Indian Tibet, Vol. I, p.46
3. G. Tucci and E. Gherzi, translated by M.A. Johnstone,(1996), Secrets of Tibet, fig. 2
4. O.C.Handa, Buddhist Monasteries of Himachal(1987)p. 68
5. O.C. Handa, Buddhist Western Himalaya, Part 1 - A Politico-Religious History (2001).



Mounds and ruins at the centre of the main site.



Ruins of two walls (following the red line).



Remains of stupa #5.

Spiti Valley- A Preliminary Archaeological Investigation

Hari Chauhan*, Michael
Dowad , Tsering Norbul'

Spiti area drained by the Spiti River is bounded by Lahaul on the west, Kinnaur on the south and Kullu on the east. On the north, western Tibet, earlier called Guge, abuts on it. Composed of the alluvial deposits high above the river, Spiti Valley is relatively broad tableland. This valley has been known for its age-old monasteries, dating back to the CE 10th century.

The early history of Spiti remained rather vague for want of archaeological evidence and historical record. Spiti is not mentioned in the earlier literary sources. Thus, the formal history of Spiti usually begins with the foundation of monasteries in the CE 10th century. The only information regarding the pre-Buddhist culture may be traced from the inscription discovered in the entry-hall of the Tabo *chos-khor*. That inscription bears the names of places and clans in the language of Zhang-zhung. From that inscription, it may be assumed that the inhabitants of this valley were not the Tibetan in the 10th century. Tucci also remarks that transformation of this region was not just a matter of religious conversion, but a process of political pacification (cf. Tucci, 1935). Majority of names occurring in the inscription of the entry-hall dates back to 10th century are non-Tibetan.

Recent archaeological finding throws some light on the early history of Spiti Valley. During my visit of the area along with a team of the archaeologists, the author came in contact with Michael Dowad and Tsering Norbu. That duo has discovered many specimens of rock art in the vicinity and brought out many significant findings that may prove to be a milestone for establishing a cogent historical background of the Spiti Valley.

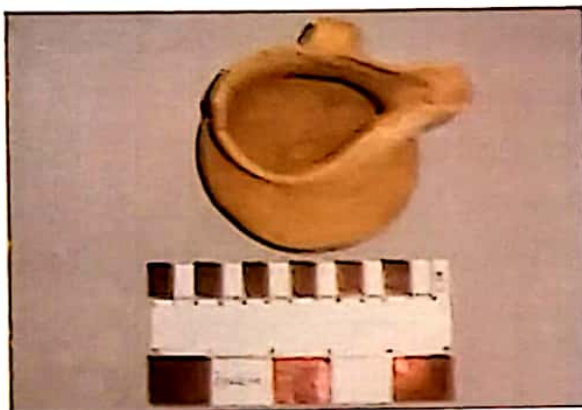
Our team, which is already engaged in the study of high altitude mountain archaeology for more than three decade, has explored and excavated many burial sites in Uttarakhand (Malari, Sarna-Baseri, etc.) along the border with Tibet. Now, for the last four years, it is working in the Kinnaur district and has explored many sites of burial culture. The most significant among those are Kanam, Lippa, Rarang and Ropa in the Poo subdivision. The findings from Lippa and Kanam are very interesting, for that throws significant light on the cultural and political link of the people of those areas with their counterparts in the other parts of country during ancient period. In Spiti, burial sites are found at Chicham, Kibber, Tashi Gang, Rangrick, Hikam, Kaza, Kungri, Khar, Poh, Nidang, Gue, etc. The burials at Mane and Tashigang have revealed pottery similar to

that of Kanam, Lipka and Ropa. The earthen pots found at Tshi Gang have similar pottery practice as reported from Kinnaur and Tibet.

The pit-burial exposed below village Tshigang is 55 cm square at the depth of about 1.19 meters from the top of mound. All the bones were found jumbled together, and the red wheel-turned wares were placed on the side of skull. The pit contained four layers of orthostats topped by three capping stones. The wheel-turned red pottery contained two round dishes, one jar and one round pitcher and one bowl.



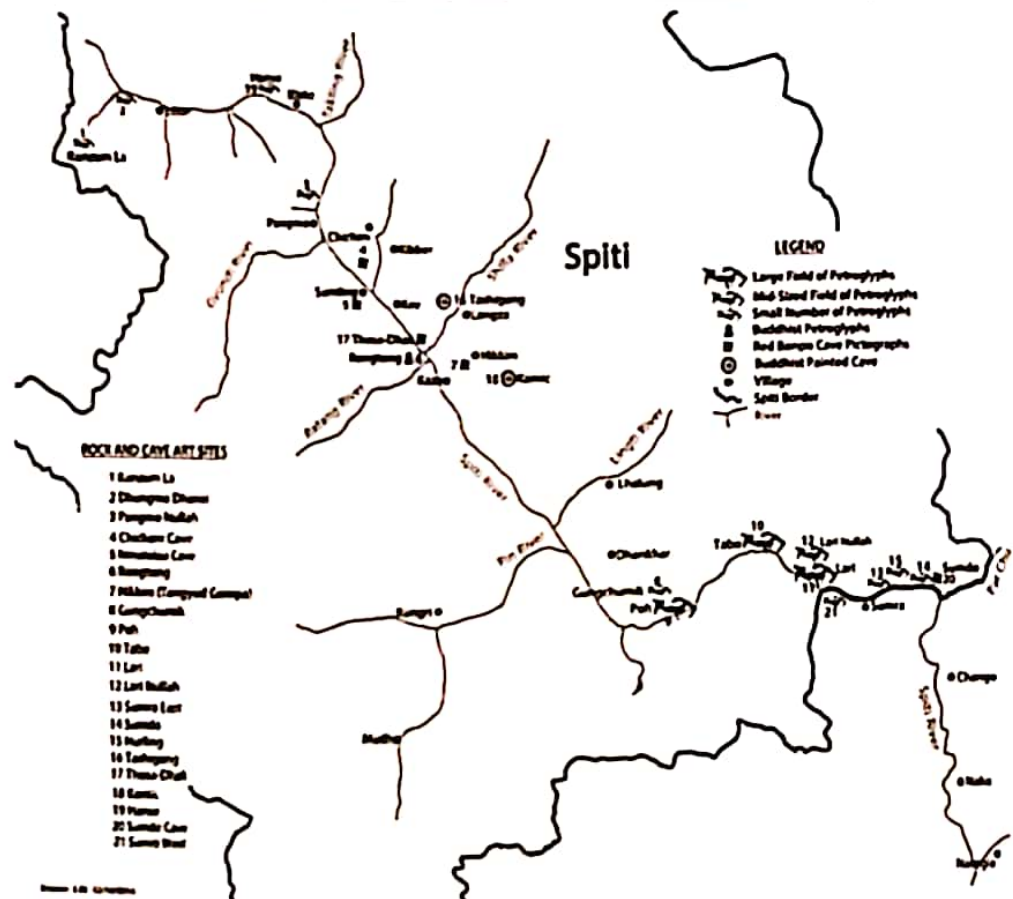
Pit burial Tshigang, Spiti.



The most significant findings from Spiti Valley are the petroglyphs and rock paintings (pictographs) found at various sites. These are the most prolific archaeological resource to trace out the history and culture of the area, but remained inaccessible to the archaeologists and historians due to difficult geographical condition. The people who inhabited Spiti thousands of years ago recorded their feelings and ideas on the rocks either by scratching the naturally patinised surface or painting that with colour. These are not only graffiti that the people created in the prehistoric or early historical times to

record their feelings, but these are the important signatures that can unfold the cultural background of the bygone era. G. Tucci first reported the rock carving from the south slopes of the Kunzam Pass. O. C. Handa and Laxman Thakur also reported many petroglyphs from the lower Spiti region. Petroglyphs are spread almost in the entire valley, extending from the Kunzam Pass to Samdo. Most of it was reported from the lower part of Spiti. Petroglyphs are engraved on the rocks with the simple stone tools. In some cases, these are very simple and contain only single representation; while in other there are several representations of flora, fauna and geometrical devices. The common inscribed symbols are sun, moon, swastika, yak, blue sheep, stag, deer, tiger, rabbit, hunter, warrior, etc. Schematic and simplified figures, weathering and re-patination of the engraved rock surface and variation in the rock art motifs and techniques suggest that these petroglyphs may go back to the Bronze Age or prehistoric period.

Rock And Cave Art Sites of Spiti, Himachal Pradesh





Sumra, Spiti: Petroglyph depicting a complex composition of radiating sun, stag, deer, wild yalk, and hunter.



Lari (Spiti) : Petroglyph showing blue sheep and hunters. One hunter is stretching a bow loaded with arrow and other is standing in front of sheep holding weapon in his hand.



Petroglyph , Poh (Spiti) : A hunter aiming to shoot at the belly of the blue sheep



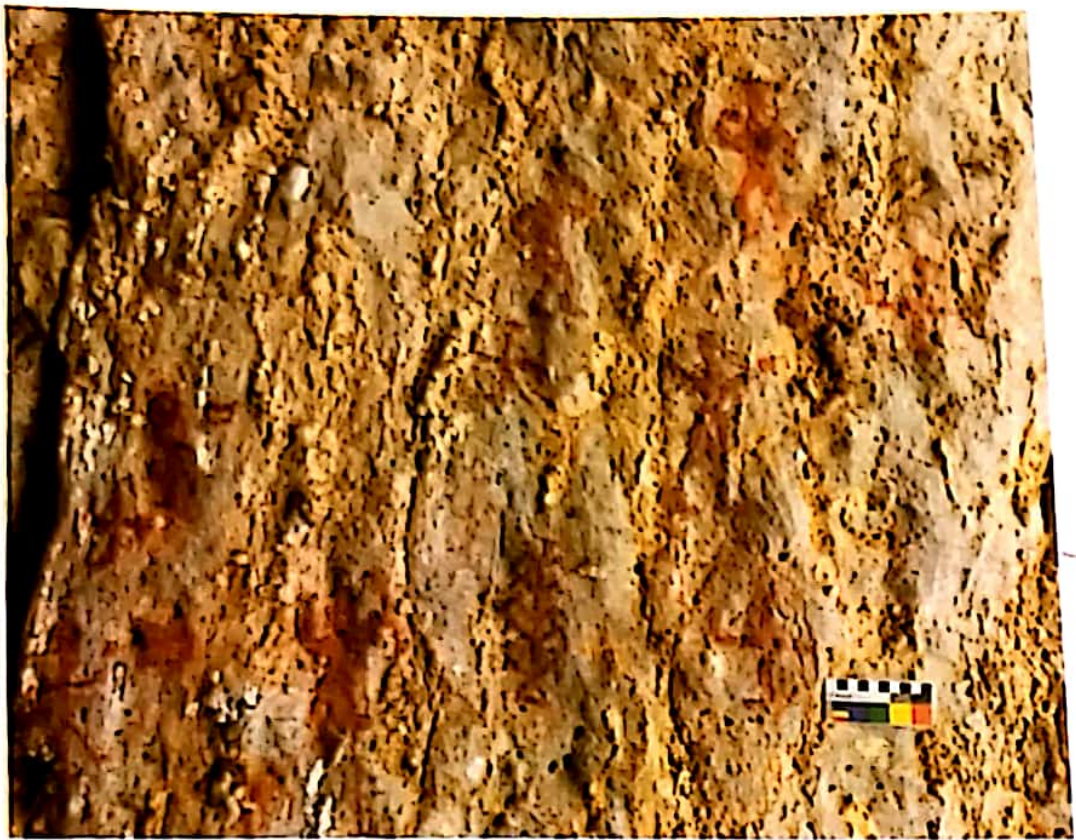
Tabo(Spiti): Petroglyph depicting a complex composition of anthropomorphic, zoomorphic and geometrical designs. Sun, swastika, wild yak, rabbit, deer, ti hunter and group of other animals are engraved.



Lari(Spiti): Petroglyph depicting fighting scene. The two warriors seating on the horseback in attacking position another figures following these warriors holding arrow and spear.

The pictographs (rock painting), done with red ochre, were discovered in the rock shelters (caves) mainly in the upper part of Spiti up to the Pin Valley at Chhicham, Sumling, Tshigang, Rangrick, Hikkim, etc. Commonly drawn symbols are the human with spear, bow and arrow, animals, like wild yak, blue sheep, leopard, deer, and birds. The commonly depicted geometrical symbols are swastika, sun, spoked disc, trees, etc. One of the interesting symbols noticed in some of the paintings is a maze-like plant.

These sites provide invaluable records of the beliefs and cultural practices of the people who inhabited this area in the primitive past. The discovered rock paintings may be assigned a time bracket between the Iron Age and proto-historic period (about 800 to 200 BCE) on the consideration of stylistic features. These relics must be considered precious and outstanding archival records of that period and properly documented and conserved for the posterity.



Nimaloksa cave: Complex composition featuring a swastiks, human figures and maize like tree. Some figures are seems to be dancing posture and some are holding arrow and shield



Rock shelter Chicham:, Pictograph depicting swastika, sun, tree, bird, hunters, lizard, worm and animal etc.



Tangyud: Pictographs depicting maze like plant, swastika, sun, half moon, anthropomorphic figure(hunter), bird, yak.



Tshigang: Pictographs which is about 20 feet high in cave cleft depicting sun, swatik, deer and wild sheep

Note on Conservation Problems in Monuments located in Spiti with special reference to Buddhist Monasteries at Tabo in Himachal Pradesh

C. Dorje*

Spiti is bounded on the north by Ladakh, west by Lahaul and Kullu, east by Tibet-China and on the south by Kinnaur and is a Sub-Division of District Lahaul & Spiti in Himachal Pradesh. It comprises the whole valley of Spiti river including that of its tributary, the Pin-doon, almost to its confluence with Sutlej. The area is almost rocky, barren and devoid of vegetation but has preserved rich cultural heritage in the form of monasteries, palaces, forts, rock engravings, rock cut sculptures, chortens, mani-walls, etc. dating back to 1st-2nd century AD to 17-18th century AD. These archaeological remains scattered all over the region are important from the point of art history as well as bear the links with ancient Buddhist iconography and culture. Important monasteries in Spiti valley are Tabo, Ki, Lhalun, Pin, Nathang, Pooh, Thangyur and Kaza. Located on the rocky hills and trade routes, these monasteries have rich collections of ritual objects, sculptures and scriptures and playing important roles in preserving art and culture. The walls are decorated with murals depicting details of Buddhist iconography on different themes. These monasteries are not merely the centre of worship but also are the hub of religious and artistic, educational, social and economic activities. Tabo monastic complex comprises of nine shrines viz. from south to north, Sergyi Lha Khang, Kyil Khang, Bromton Lha Khang Chedpo, Tsug Lha Khang or Du Khang, Go Khang or Zelma, Gon Khang, Byambai Lha Khang, Brompton Lha Khang and Karjung Lha Khang besides numerous chortens (stupas) and mani walls. The entire complex is enclosed by a compound wall and entry to the complex is from the east.

The use of sun-dried bricks or stamped mud walls from *in-situ* or mud laid between wooden planks and basket shattering are the traditional construction of this valley. The clay for sun-dried bricks contain sand, sometime small gravels and often straw or grass (*bhusa*) and dried on natural sunlight. These mud-brick walls are laid in mud mortar and reinforced with wooden members horizontally and vertically. The corners are formed by means of toothing. A stretcher brick is placed at 90° angle to header brick and for the next row the bricks laid inversely to ensure the solidity of the corners and the walls.

The foundations are dug to a depth of one to one-and-half metre. Sometimes the foundation of earlier building is used. The stones are laid in roughly mud mortar up to plinth level. The cavities are filled with rubble stones. The roof is flat with low parapet

*Former Joint Director General(ASI), E-44, GH-94, PGI Enclave, Sector-20, Panchkula (Haryana)

walls ornamented with numerous prayer flags. In most cases, the rooms are of modest sizes. There are more than two main beams in each room supported by wooden pillars and brackets. Lathing is made of little willow sticks arranged to form a pattern. A fairly thick layer of grass is then placed on the lathing. Over which a compact layer of earth is packed down and left to dry. Then the top is finished with mud-gobar leeping. The wood used is of deodar, popular and willow. The floor is made by scattering small stones, crushed carefully and the process repeated several times. In most cases the wooden ceiling bears paintings depicting floral and figural designs. The base of the paintings is prepared by applying to the carrier two coats. The first one is coarse in texture contained a considerable amount of fibrous materials with varying in thickness. Further surface is made smooth by putting on it another layer of mud mixed with paddy husk, etc. Finally, fine plaster about 2-3cm thickness is applied to smooth the surface with lime mixed with mud wash of fine quality. The thickness of the plaster varies from shrine to shrine. The inner surfaces of the walls are plastered in mud distemper and resin based glue is added to avoid rub off. The outer walls are coated with layer of water resistant tooah (poured down the wall) followed by an optional lime wash. It is likely that the gum extracted from apricot used as binding medium. The paintings in various shrines show a wide variety of earth colours, white, red, yellow, blue, green and black and mixture of three colours in various shades. The murals which are mainly on mud plaster have been executed in a tempera-style.

Due to neglect for centuries the monasteries had suffered a lot. There are many causes of deteriorations. The most common structural problem is a number of horizontal and vertical cracks of varying degree of width and depth in walls, foundations and roofs. Short hair cracks appear on mud walls due shrinkage and drying out of the surface. Flaking/peeling off the painted surface and swelling of mud plaster are also common problems which at place becomes so severe that the plaster hangs loosely and dangerously and appears about to fall. At places, the coarse plaster is partly detached from the mud brick wall. The former developed bowls of few centimeters deep. There are traces of detachment of plaster from the wall surface due to displacement of latter. In most cases paintings are badly affected by depositing thick layers of soot, smoke, dirt, tarry and oily matters due to lightening of lamps inside temples, etc. during day to day functions. At places these paintings are concealed under the coat of lime wash. Damage has also been caused by scratch marks, water marks and mud-streaks.

Western Himalayan region also experiences heavy rainfall in summer and snowfall in winter. The excessive water causing seepage as a result there is heavy damage to the

structures as well as paintings. The seepage water gets access behind the mud plaster and causes the detachment and bulging of the plaster and at places the plaster lost its hold on the wall and the binding medium perished and the pigments starting flaking. The mural on the ceiling have vanished to large extent due to seepage of water and deterioration of wooden planks and rafters, etc. The damage due to these factors can easily be seen at many places. The variations of temperature as well as relative humidity causes the expansion and contraction leading to bulging, cracking and detaching of mud plaster and also blistering and flaking of pigments. At places even the plaster are seen overlapping after cracking and detachment. The wall paintings are also susceptible to the moisture. Due to excessive dryness, the pigment layers showed a tendency to curl up in fragments resulting in eventual flaking and loss of colours.

The winds blowing during autumn months are another important cause in damaging the paintings by depositing the dust and dirt on the painted surface. In due course these accumulated dust and dirt are settled down on the paintings and become hard and firm and formed a translucent to opaque film on the paintings.

Being the area in the seismic zone III as per code No.875 of BIS, the earthquakes are also playing an important role in damaging the structures as well as the wall paintings and other objects. The walls of the most of the monasteries have vertical cracks and also the earthquake of January 19, 1975 had damaged the stucco and the paintings in the monasteries. Damage to the paintings is also caused by the crude repairing of the fallen portions with lime plaster, vandalism and constant rubbing and frequent touching of the lower portion of the wall by the visitors and devotees.

Since 1975, the Archaeological Survey of India is carrying out extensive repairs at Tabo Monastic complex to avert the process of further deterioration, undertaking consolidation and preservation to the maximum extent wherever necessary by following the principle of minimum intervention while conserving to provide required stability to the monument and have got success in solving various problems of conservation. The roof of most of the shrines rendered watertight by replacing the worn out and decayed wooden members particularly the planks and rafters and then the planks containing paintings were refixed in their original position. The roof terrace was reconditioned by giving proper slopes for drainage of water. The parapet wall was also repaired. The sagging ceilings of shrines, wherever necessary, were provided with wooden supports. The extra load of earth packing was removed and fresh earth packing provided and finished with mud plaster mixed with hay and cow dung. The cracks developed in the walls were repaired by stitching and filling up the gaps and voids. The decayed and

flaking portions of the plastered from the outer surface were removed and scraped out and replastered as per original. The compound wall enclosing the monastery was also repaired by dismantling the bulged out and dislodged portions and by reconstructing the lower portions of wall in random rubble masonry and pise wall over it. The settled debris in and around the monastic complex was removed and leveled. Dust, dirt and smoke from oil burners and water streaks disfiguring the wall paintings ere cleaned and preserved.

The paintings on the walls covered with layers of dust and mud stains were properly cleaned with the help of organic solvents and preserved. Cracks caused in the paintings due to earthquakes were filled up. The flaking of pigments were checked by applying a coat of poly vinyl acetate in toluene on cleared surface. The painted plaster which tended to part from the walls was also refixed with help of plaster of pairs and adhesives. The broken edges of the plaster were strengthened by fixing and filleting followed by documentation of treated portions. The minor cracks which developed in the inner walls were filled properly matching the surroundings.

The soot and oily accretions which covered the paintings were also cleaned and preserved. The stucco image of Vajrapani in Du Khang which had collapsed and broken into pieces were mended by piercing the available fragments with the help of plaster of Paris and fevicol and refixed in position. The stucco image of seated Maitreya was cracked on the necks and shoulder. This was removed after strengthening the shoulder and palm joints. Hidden iron bars were inserted to prevent it from damage. Attempts have also been made to repair several other statues in Du Khang by providing wooden and plaster supports to minimize the damage in the event of future tremors. There are still many repairs to be attended which include the ornamental wood work, hollow or bulged portions in between the mud brick wall and the plaster and paint layers.



View of Tabo Monastery, Spiti

From Aśoka to His Holiness, the XIV Dalai Lama: Buddhism vis-à-vis Tibet in archaeology, traditions, and sociology of Uttarakhand Himalaya, India*

Maheshwar P. Joshi

Introduction:

The geographical area covering the present study extends from the western border of Nepal in the east to the river Tons, a tributary of the Jamuna, in the west; and from the Terai-Bhabhar region in a line from Dehradun to Khatima-Tanakpur in Nainital, Champawat Districts in the south to the western Tibetan border in the north. It is situated between 28° 44' and 31° 25' north latitude, and 77° 45' and 81° 1' east longitude.

According to the Buddhist traditions after the 3rd Great Council of Pāṭaliputra Aśoka, the Maurya, sent missionaries to different quarters for the propagation of Buddhism; two of them, namely, Kāśyapa Gotra and Madhyama, went to the Himalaya region. (Cunningham 1854: 289; Thapar 1977: 48). Inscribed caskets from Sanchi unfold that they contained '(Relics) of the emancipated son of Koti, Kasyapa Gotra, the missionary to the whole of Hemawanta', and 'of the emancipated Gotiputra, the brother of religion amongst the Dardabhisāras of the Hemawanta'. Palaeographically, the inscriptions on the caskets are dated to the 3rd century BCE (Cunningham 1854: 287, 289, 316-18; Rhys Davids 2010: 299-30), thus lending support to the Buddhist tradition. In this context the set of Aśoka's 14 Rock Edicts at Kalsi (District Dehradun) in Uttarakhand Himalaya is significant, for this is the only site in the entire Himalaya where he got the Rock Edicts inscribed, and therefore one of the most likely candidates for the Buddhist missionary activities during Aśokan times. Kalsi must have been a busy hub of human activities that is why Aśoka found it as an appropriate place to get his edicts inscribed for the propagation of his *Dhamma*. It may be noted here that archaeological explorations at Kalsi have brought to light traces of a settlement belonging to the Mauryan times (IAI 1972-73: 33). Elsewhere, it has been shown that it was an important central trade place like modern *mandi*, where traders from the plains of India and the Himalayan region assembled to sell their goods (Joshi and Brown 1987). Since traders have contributed substantially to the spread of Buddhism, it is likely that during this very time people carrying out Indo-Tibetan trade through Uttarakhand introduced Buddhism in adjoining Tibet (cf., Aldenderfer 2007). In course of time these trade activities also influenced

* Revised version of the paper presented to: International Seminar on Reflections and Revival of Buddhism in South and South-east Asia in modern times, 2012, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith, Varanasi.

** Professor & Head, Department of History (Retd.), Kumaun University, Nainital, Uttarakhand.

other aspects of life. In fact, in the socio-economic life of Uttarakhand inhabitants of western Tibet, locally known as *Hunl*, have played significant role in the past and, with the flight of His Holiness, the XIV Dalai Lama and his retinue in 1959 from Tibet to India, Uttarakhand, particularly its capital Dehradun, has become an important centre of the Tibetan Diaspora, who are not only contributing to the cultural milieu of Uttarakhand but also addressing the moral, physical, academic, and socio-economic needs of Uttarakhand. In the following sections I will try to delineate Buddhist activities in Uttarakhand, and the role Tibetans have played in the history of Central Himalaya as unfolded in archaeology, traditions, and sociology.

Archaeology:

It is indeed enigmatic that we have very few archaeological remains in Uttarakhand associated with Buddhism, although literature and local traditions would have us believe that Buddhism was widely popular here. It already has been suggested that the earliest Buddhist activities in Uttarakhand are associated with Aśoka. Significantly, the famous Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsiang informs us about the presence of five Buddhist monasteries with a few priests in the hills country called (Po-lo-hi-mo-pu-lo = Brahmapura, identified with modern Uttarakhand) in the seventh century CE (Beal 1884: 198). However, in the hills region of Uttarakhand we do not come across any Buddhist remains which may be dated to the times of Hiuen Tsiang or else prior to him, as will be clear from what follows.

1. M.C. Joshi of the ASI reported sculptured architectural members of a stone railing from Bayandhura situated in the foothills (District Nainital), representing 'beautiful *mithuna* figures... *Yaksha*, *Yakshi* and *Kichaka gana* in relief with traces of upper and lower miniature rail borders', stylistically placed in the 2nd - 1st centuries BCE (*IAR* 1971-72: 80). There is no evidence to show that the railing under reference encompassed a Buddhist *stupa*. It is equally true to the Gopeshwar stone railing member as well, although Kaṭhocha (2003: 82-3) associates it with a Buddhist *stupa*. In this connection it is also to be noted that at Kashipur also no evidence of any Buddhist monuments has been found, as reported in some sections of the print media when excavations were in progress there.
2. Three Buddhist sculptures collected from Haridwar area, now in the collection of Gurukul Kangri University, Haridwar, the earliest of which is assigned to the Gupta period (*circa* 4th-6th centuries CE).
3. Barahat Buddha image bearing a Tibetan inscription reading '*Lha-vechan-nagaraṣai thuv-pā*' (sage of Devabhaṭṭāraka Nāgarāja) identified with his

homonym, who ruled Guge in the 11th century CE (Sāṃkṛityāyana 1953: 349). However, subsequent discoveries have proved that Nāgarāja was a Nepali king of Semja as recorded in the Dullu Pillar Inscription (Tucci 1956: 46-49). Whether he came to Barahat on a pilgrimage (Pandey 1997: 122, and fn. 81 on page 152), or else Uttarakhand was under the 'hegemony of the king of Semja from the time of Nagaraja' (*ibid*: 130), cannot be said with certainty. However, his use of Tibetan script and name, coupled with his genealogy written in Tibetan, indicates his close association with Tibet. It is likely that the Semja rulers at some point of time may have ruled Guge as well.

4. An approximately 7 feet high votive *stupa* from Nala, dateable to c.12th century CE (Sāṃkṛityāyana 1953: 442-43; Nautiyal 1969: 116, fig. 26). Elsewhere, Nautiyal (*ibid*: 154) reports 'a few carved figures of the Lāmās with the Tibetan and the Brāhmī inscriptions belonging to about 6th-7th century A.D.', also from Nala. Interestingly, Ram (1992: 113) describes these as Bodhisattva images, but does not mention presence of the *stupa* at Nala.
5. Tunganath a metal image of the Buddha (Ram 1992: 113, 162; Rahul 1953: 452-53; Tewari 1984: 13).
6. Lata (Niti Valley) 2 copper images of the Buddha inscribed in the 10th century CE Nāgarī characters (Kaṭhocha 1981: 80)
7. Mana 2 mutilated Buddhist images in metal (Kaṭhocha 1981: 80).
8. Srinagar bronze image of Avalokiteśvara (*Ibid*; cf. Ram 1992: 113).⁹
- Buddhist image (?) from Agastamuni (Ram 1992: 113).
10. Two mediaeval bronze images of the Buddha, both depicting him in the *bhūmisparśa-mudrā*, one in private collection of Mr. Anup Tewari, Library Assistant, the other in the departmental museum, Department of History, Kumaun University Campus, Almora.
11. Metal sculpture(s) enshrined in the Mahasu temple, Hanol (District Dehradun) depicting the Buddhain the *bhūmisparśa-mudrā* (?)¹
12. Stone sculpture representing Tara from Jakheta, near Almora (Tewari 1984: 10).²
13. Tibetan inscriptions from Mana (*ARIE* 1969-70: 55).
14. Inscriptions of the Buddhist kings of far western Nepal (Atkinson 1884: 511-19; Sāṃkṛityāyana 1953: 349; Joshi 2009; Pant 2009).
15. Apart from these, Moradhwaj (a site located in the foothills of Himalaya in District Bijnor, U.P., close to Kotdwar, District Pauri, Uttarakhand), was

excavated under the direction of Prof. Dr. K.P. Nautiyal (*IAR* 1982-83: 94). Among others, the site yielded two stone sculptures, and few terracotta figures representing the Buddha and Bodhisattvas dateable to between the 1st and early 4th centuries CE (Nautiyal and Khanduri 1986: 96-97, Pls. IIa-b, IIIa).

16. Tibetan inscription written with some pigment on a rock in a remote area of District Chamoli.³

Not all the antiquities enumerated above can be associated with Buddhism without physical verification, for some of the identifications are obviously erroneous; to wit, Shukla (1988: 68) reports discovery of a *stupa* at Purola (District Uttarkashi), which, on the basis of the excavators' published reports and photographs (Nautiyal and Khanduri 1989) can be convincingly identified as a sacrificial altar. Likewise, Kāthocha's (1981: 79, fig. 37) identification of a stone sculpture from Gopeshwar (District Chamoli) with the Buddha image was found to be that of Lakulīśa (Dimri 2012: 43, pl. 39). However, it is likely that some of the Buddhist sculptures may have existed in the ninth century CE follows from the fact that in his Bageshwar Stone Slab inscription, Bhūdeva, a local king of the Katyūri Dynasty (latter half of the ninth century CE), styles himself as enemy par excellence of the Buddha and the Śravaṇa ('*Parama Buddha Śravaṇa ripu*', Princep 1838: 1058, 1060). It may have inspired Sāṃkṛityāyana (1958: 57) to suggest that some broken sculptures situated in Bageshwar temple complex represent the Buddha seated in *bhūmisparśa-mudrā*. However, closer examination of these icons by the present author revealed that they represented seated Gaṇeśa. Interestingly, in the *Mānasakhaṇḍa*, a local *purāṇa* referring to the geographical region extending from the basin of the Karnali in western Nepal (see, Pandey 1989: 25-29; Panta 2064: *Prākkathana* [Prologue]) in the east to Karnaprayaga (Garhwal) in the west (*Mānasakhaṇḍa*: ch. 24), we find mention of a small number of places of pilgrimage in the region under reference associated with the Buddha, albeit in the Brahmanical context. Thus, while describing the religious importance of the Piṇḍārikā (Pindar) river the *Mānasakhaṇḍa* refers to Mountain Vaiṇya by the side of the confluence of the Pindar and the Vaiṇyā, in which is situated a place called Bauddhanāga. On the other side of this very mountain fold flows the Bodhinī which also meets the Pindar. It reads that at the confluence of these two rivers Mahā-Vishṇu took the form of the Buddha (*tayo saṅge Mahā-Vishṇuṃ Bauddharūpadharaṃ prabhum*), and he is worshipped there as such (*Mānasakhaṇḍa*, 24. 16-19). It may be noted that for the most part the Pindar Valley is situated in Garhwal. Association of this region with Buddhism is also alluded to in the *Kedārakhaṇḍa*, in which the eastern limit of Kedārakhaṇḍa is called Bauddhachala (40. 29). In another chapter of the

Mānasakhaṇḍa, while narrating the virtue of the Sarayū (a local river in Kumaon), it mentions a place where it meets the Prajāvatī, then the stream forms a lake called Bauddhasara adjoining which is Bauddhaśilā (*Ibid*, 94. 8-10). Further down the stream there is a place called Bauddhatīrtha. He who bathes there attains the world of Viṣṇu (*Ibid*, 95. 97). Situated in the vicinity of these places there lies Mountain Suraparvata which is the source of the Surabhāgā. At the confluence of the Surabhāgā and the Devabhāgā is worshipped 'Bauddheśa', worship of 'Bauddheśa-Śaṅkara' leads to supreme position (*Ibid*, 134. 8-11). Apparently, in the *Mānasakhaṇḍa* the Buddha is completely Brahmanised (see also footnote 9 below).

It is interesting to note that along the ancient trade routes to western Tibet through Uttarakhand Himalaya several Tibetan inscriptions have been found. Impressions of two such inscriptions in stone were brought to my notice by one of my students from Jauhar or Dharchula (both in District Pithoragarh) region a few decades ago, one of which reads 'Om Maṇipadme huṃ'. The other running into five lines remains to be deciphered. However, with the exception of the *stupa* at Nala, it remains to be established whether the remaining antiquities mentioned above were locally produced. Likewise, not all inscriptions mentioned above are associated with Buddhism. For example, the Mana inscriptions contain royal orders relating to trade items and conduct of traders. Similarly, the inscriptions issued by respectively Aśoka Challa and Krāchalla (Atkinson 1884: 511-19) reveal that although they were Buddhists, in Uttarakhand they patronized Brahmanical order. There is thus a strong probability that the Buddhist sculptures found in Uttarakhand were brought as objects of personal faith by individuals who visited Uttarakhand from time to time. Apparently, archaeology affords meagre information about Buddhist activities in Uttarakhand.

Traditions and Central Himalayan sociology:

In the introductory section of this essay I have shown that already during the third century BCE Buddhist monks had started their missionary activities in the Himalayan region. Circumstantial evidence indicates that by that time Indo-Tibetan trade through Uttarakhand was well established (Joshi and Brown 1987; Joshi 1989a). I have a strong feeling that during this very time Buddhism was also introduced in western Tibetan provinces of Guge and Purang, for Buddhist traditions recorded by Hiuen Tsiang maintain that it had already gained adherence in Central Asia during the very lifetime of the Buddha (Leitich 2008).⁵ Motīchandra's interesting account of trade and trade-routes of ancient India makes it clear that Uttarakhand Himalaya was also connected through a Himalayan route to Central Asia from pre-Mauryan times. It may be noted here that a large amount of his account is based on the early Buddhist literature (Motīchandra 1966:

chapters 1, 3, 6 and 7, and map appended in the end showing ancient India's foreign trade routes), and lends support to this view. This route still continued to be traversed by the traders in the nineteenth century CE follows from the following comments made by Wilson (1841: xvi) on Moorcroft, the famous British veterinary doctor-turned-trader of the late eighteenth-early nineteenth centuries CE:

The most enterprising, and, in a great measure, the most successful efforts to penetrate into central Asia from Hindustan, have, however, been made by, or have originated with, Mr. William Moorcroft.

It is worthwhile to add that though Moorcroft failed due to commencing his journey late in the winter, he still preferred the Niti pass in Uttarakhand to go to trans-Himalayan region of Tibet and Ladakh, thence Central Asia, as may be inferred from his own statement:

I had been induced to prefer the Niti pass as the most direct and practicable line of road, as affording an opportunity of establishing commercial relations with the Hiunias and people of Lassa, and as connecting the route to Ladakh with the direction of my former journey to Ghertop (Moorcroft and Trebeck 1841: 5).

The people settled in the northern fringe of Uttarakhand Himalaya enjoyed monopoly in Indo-Tibetan trade from an unknown past. Traditionally, they used to be addressed as *Saukā*, *Tolchhā*, *Mārchhā*, and *Jād* (Atkinson 1886: 113-16; Sherring 1906: 61-64; Brown 1984: ch. 2).⁶ However, when the Gorkhas occupied Uttarakhand (CE 1791-1815) they used the term 'Bhotiyā' for that trading community of Uttarakhand on the analogy of their Nepali counterparts,⁷ and in turn the British followed suit.

... In Nepali 'bhotiya' means Tibetan, and 'bhot' is the name for Tibet; Tibetans call their country Bod which in colloquial use is aspirated into Bhot. Two other districts of Nepal, Mustangbhot at the head of the Kali valley and Chharkabhot still farther west, have the suffix 'bhot'.

The inhabitants of these places, and indeed most of those who dwell along the Nepal-Tibet border, have more affinities with Tibet than with Nepal. They speak a Tibetan dialect, practise a similar corrupt form of Buddhism, and have the same manners, customs and dress. They trade both to the north and to the south. The easiest and shortest routes lie to the south, and food, particularly rice for which they have a great liking, can be got only from Nepal, so that the strongest link lies in that direction. But though they belong to Nepal it is doubtful if the ordinary man at Katmandu would recognise them as fellow subjects or be much flattered by the knowledge that they were. They receive, I imagine, but little attention from the Nepalese authorities and pay them little either in the way of taxes, services or

respect. (Tilman 1952: 139, see chapter XII in passim)

Interestingly, the British themselves acknowledged that the Indian trading community addressed as 'Bhotia' is in reality not 'Bhotia',⁸ and that they do not like this mode of address (Sherring 1906: 61-64). Archaeological and archival sources from Uttarakhand predating Gorkha occupation also indicate nonexistence of a community known as 'Bhotiya' in that region. However, existence of some of the followers of Tibetan Buddhism among the so called 'Bhotias' of Uttarakhand is an established fact, but their identity as such is little known, except for the Jād community (of Nilang in Tehri Garhwal, Atkinson 1886: 115-16), and few among the Rañ community (of Darma and Byans, Kumaon). Apparently, presence of such groups bears testimony to the spread of Tibetan Buddhism in Uttarakhand and may account for the same among several other communities settled in the entire Himalayan border region from Arunachal to Kashmir. However, their relationship with the Tibetans needs to be understood in the light of recent linguistic and genetic studies (see, Kraaijenbrink *et al* 2009).

Combined testimony of archaeological and archival source-material coupled with local traditions and folklore suggests that the Uttarakhandi 'Bhotiya' community comprising heterogeneous groups of adventurous traders were first organized under the hegemony of the Kuṇindas (*circa* 500 BCE CE 300, Joshi 1989a), and then continued to grow in number and prosperity in the subsequent centuries.⁹ They specialized in the Indo-Tibetan trade through Uttarakhand, monopolised it, and thrived on it. In course of time, to retain their monopoly, particularly when the British tried to carve out a niche for themselves in the Indo-Tibetan trade through Uttarakhand, the 'Bhotiya-s' themselves invented traditions to highlight their hazardous adventures in the rugged trans-Himalayan tracts to discourage potential competitors. At the same time painting the *Huñi-s* (Tibetans) as barbarians they also publicised that to carry out trade with the *Huñi-s* it was mandatory to have commensal relations with them. On account of their beef eating habits the *Huñi-s* were loathed by the orthodox Hindus, therefore the 'Bhotiya-s', the trade partners of the *Huñi-s*, were also looked down upon, and were placed in the lower stratum of social hierarchy (see for information, Traill 1832: 21, 34-37; Atkinson 1886: 127-34; Sherring 1906: 69-70; Brown 1984: ch. 2; Joshi: forthcoming). Brown has rightly observed that these practices were instrumental in creating the so-called 'Bhotiya' identity (Brown 1984; 1992; 1994).

According to Tucci (1956: 109) 'in eleventh century there was unrest among the Himalayan tribes' of western Nepal, some of whom crossed into western Tibet. Among them the 'Khasas' were predominant 'who as a war-like aristocracy controlled a fluctuating mass of other tribes', and established the kingdom of Guge to the south of the

Sutluj (Tucci 1956: 74-75; see also, Francke 1994: 167-71). Interestingly, Schuh (1994) has also discussed at length various traditions in the context of Muktinath Valley (in western Nepal) bearing on Indian origin of many Tibetan aristocracy. In fact traditions have it that Ñā-ṭhri Chen-po (Nyatri Tsenpo), the very first king of Tibet who flourished in second century BCE, was the son of one Śatayuddha, an Indian king (Thoṇḍupa 1976: 9).

In Uttarakhand also traditions are not wanting to show Indian origin of the adjacent western Tibetan inhabitants. Thus, in the famous epic folklore of Kumaon we notice mutual marriage agreements taking place on the one hand between Mālūsāhī, the Katyūrī prince of Kumaon, and Rājulā, daughter of Sunapati Saukā (a rich 'Bhotiya' trader of Kumaon), and on the other between the latter and Hūṇi Chandrī Bikhepāla, son(s?) of Ajaipāla, the king of Hūṇadeśa. In Uttarakhandi traditions Tibet is called *Hūṇadeśa*, and their inhabitants *Hūṇi* (see for the text of the *Mālūsāhī*, Jośī 1982: 18-76; Meissner 1985). Obviously, here the names of the Tibetan princes are of Indian origin. Interestingly, Brown (1984: ch. 2) has collected a substantial amount of archival source-material and traditional accounts showing Rajput settlers in the Tibetan provinces adjoining Uttarakhand, whence some migrated to cis-Himalayan valleys of Uttarakhand. In Garhwal there is a tradition that one of the Garhwali princes married a Tibetan princess.¹⁰ In fact, the entire region extending from Kumaon in the west to Doti (western Nepal) in the east, including the adjoining trans Himalayan region up to Lake Manasarovar, used to be called *Mānasakhaṇḍa*, (see for the Sanskrit text, *Mānasakhaṇḍa*). Likewise, there is a widely popular tradition in Garhwal associating Tholing Monastery of Guge (western Tibet) with Badrinath. It is said that the original seat of Lord Badrīnātha is in Tholing, and the one at Badrinath (District Chamoli) is the secondary one for those devotees who cannot afford to travel to Tholing (*Sāṃkṛityāyana* 1953: 340, see also for another tradition, *ibid*: 471-73). Significantly, *Sāṃkṛityāyana*'s description of the icon of Badrīnātha installed in the temple under reference suggests that it represents the Buddha seated in *bhūmiśarpa-mudrā* (*ibid*: 474-78). Nautiyal (1969: 153) hesitatingly supports it, and adds: 'Badrīnāth has been receiving tributes in kind from the Tholing Muṭh, in Tibet (about 40 miles from here), since quite an unknown past.' Significantly, the Khajurāho Stone Inscription of Yaśovarman, dated in 1011 VS (CE 953-54) (Kielhorn 1892), attests to the adoration of a Viṣṇu image in his Viakunṭha form in Tibet in the ninth-early tenth centuries CE. It is said that the image under reference was obtained from the Kailāsa by the king of the Bhoṭa (Tibetan) people, who gave it to his friend, the king of Kīra. The latter gave it to king Herambapāla, from whose son *Hayapati* Devapāla the image was obtained by Chaṇḍella king Yaśovarman who

installed it in a temple at Khajuraho. Kīra has been identified either with 'Kaśmīras or separately enumerated as a people' (Kielhorn 1892: 124). Equally interesting is the fact that the personal name of one of the mediaeval Hindu rulers of Chamba (Himachal Pradesh) was Bhojavarman as known from his four copper-plate inscriptions (Chhabra 1957: 23-32).

Thus, though scanty, these traditions coupled with inscriptional evidence suggest Vaishṇavite influence in Tibet,¹¹ and do not attach any stigma either on the Tibetans or else their trade partners the 'Bhotiya-s'. The latter continue to enjoy certain ritual prerogatives in the worship of Badrīnātha (Sherring 1906: 348-49), and, in fact, traditions also have it that the 'Foniya' community (nowadays one of the 'Bhotiya' communities) represents a junior line of the Garhwali ruling family, who were the official trade representatives of the Garhwali kings to the court of Tibet (see for this and associated traditions, Foniya: in press).

His Holiness, the XIV Dalai Lama, and the Tibetan Diaspora in Dehradun:

The sad flight of His Holiness, the XIV Dalai Lama, from Tibet to India in CE 1959 has added a new dimension to the Buddhist activities in Uttarakhand vis-à-vis Tibet. Tibetans are no more seen as *Huni*, they are adored as a dynamic Buddhist community, their *Lama*-s as custodians and vehicles of a glorious Buddhist tradition, long forgotten in India. The change in this perception seems to lie mainly in the hallowed spiritual image of His Holiness, the XIV Dalai Lama, recognised internationally as an apostle of peace, and supplemented by the inspiring socio-economic, religious, and academic activities of the Tibetan Diaspora living in Uttarakhand. In this section I will give a summary introduction of some premier establishments, exclusively owned and managed by the Tibetan Diaspora, which are addressing the academic, cultural, moral, physical, and socio-economic needs of the people of Uttarakhand.¹²

a. Songtsen Library:¹³

Situated in Sahasradhara Road, some eight km away from the city of Dehradun, the architecture of the Songtsen Library building has been inspired by 'Yumu Lhakhar, popularly known as Tibet's first castle and built in the 2nd century B.C. by King Nyatri Tsenpo.' Named after 'Songtsen, the 33rd King of Tibet (617-650 AD)', the Songtsen Library is a branch of the Drikung Kangyu Institute, albeit independent of it. It was 'established by His Holiness, the Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche the head of Drikung Kangyu order of the Tibetan Buddhism and was inaugurated on March 6, 2003, by His Holiness, the XIV Dalai Lama.' It is recognised by H.N.B. Garhwal University, Srinagar (Uttarakhand), as a 'Research and Resource Centre', and currently there are five research scholars enrolled in it. Besides adequately addressing the academic needs of

scholars, students, and interested general public from all over the world, the library is 'geared to the collection and preservation of books, as well as research and publication on various subjects related to Tibet and the Himalayas.' It has two spectacular auditoriums, one large and the other small, 'with well equipped conference facilities and a thoroughly modern kitchen with a qualified chef and excellent vegetarian meals.'

The Library has a rich collection of books on Tibetan studies, including history and culture of Bhutan, Nepal and nearly all the Himalayan states of India, mainly in Tibetan and English, in addition to few in German, French, Sanskrit, Nepali, and Hindi. However, its enviable rare collection consists of 'publications on the Dun huang documents, one of the earliest sources on numerous subjects on Central Asian culture including history, literature, religion, law, astrology and medicine. The original manuscripts date from around the 6th to the 12th century and were discovered in the early part of the 20th century at various caves on and near the famed Silk Road of Central Asia. Other important collections are the multi-lingual Buddhist Kagyur and Tengyur, the Bon Kagyur, many commentaries of great masters of the four major sects of Tibetan Buddhism'. Besides, the Library houses 'the personal collection and journals of the well-known western scholar and pioneer of Buddhism, Lama Anagarika Govinda. Songtsen Library has recently installed over 6000 digitized format Buddhist texts from the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center of New York.'

The Library 'publishes books and journals related to its academic activities. Presently the library publishes conference papers, the Drikung Kagyur Series on writings of great Buddhist masters, the Thunmi Riglam Series on environment and other topics, and the biannual Songtsen Tsangyang, a journal on varied subjects geared to stimulate interest and contributions on Himalayan and Tibetan studies.' So far some 50 publications have already been produced, including eleven issues of the *Songtsen Tsangyang*.

The Library has five categories of membership, namely, Sponsors/Life Time Members, Institutions, Research Scholars, General and Students, and Monks, Nuns and Senior Citizens. Currently the number of its total membership exceeds 1000. Visiting hours are from 09 AM to 5 PM with a luncheon break at 12 noon. The Library remains closed on 2nd and 4th Saturdays and all Sundays in a month. The average number of regular local/Indian visitors is 6, and of foreigners 3. The number of Western scholars increases in winter. The library offers hostel facility of very high standard at moderately low charges. It has a staff of 16 members, one of which is an Indian.

Significantly, financially this large and elaborate institution is fully supported by sponsorships and donations by devotees and philanthropists, and managed by H.H.

b. Men-tsee-Khang (Tibetan Medical and Astro Institute):

The main branch of the Men-tsee-Khang (Tibetan Medical and Astro Institute) was established in CE 1986 at Sahasradhara Road, Dehradun. At present it has two sub-branches situated at Rajpur Road and Clement Town respectively. The Sahasradhara Road branch attends to an average of 80-90 patients daily, the Rajpur Road branch, 50-60, and the Clement Town branch 40-50 patients. Significantly, about 90% of the patients are Indian.

There are four doctors, two senior ones and two interns. They examine the patients in traditional Tibetan manner, i.e., by feeling the pulse-beats (termed as *nāḍī-parīkshā* in the *Āyurveda* system). Considering that all the three hospitals are situated in the outskirts of Dehradun, the number of patients visiting them is fairly large, and bespeaks the trust in the Tibetan medicine system and its growing popularity in India. The charges, including consultation fee (Rs. 20 only), are surprisingly low, for example, during my recent visits I noticed an average monthly treatment costs some 500/- Rupees. It consists of at least three different types of pills three times a day. The medicines are made of herbs, some of which obtained from Tibet through Nepal. The present Genzing (Incharge/Chief) is Dr. Pasang Tsering, however, the ex Genzing Dr. Sonam Lhamo also continues to give her services.¹⁴

Educational institutions:¹⁵

The Tibetan Diaspora has two types of educational institutions, one for their children, and the other for monks and nuns who want to specialize in traditional Tibetan Buddhism. The former category has the following establishments:

1. Tibetan Homes at Mussoori.
2. Branch of Tibetan Homes at Rajpur Road, Dehradun.
3. Centre School for Tibetans (established by Government of India).
4. Nehru Memorial Foundation School Society, Clement Town, Dehradun.
5. Dekyi Ling, at Tibetan Colony, Sahasradhara Road, Dehradun.

The earliest of these schools is Tibetan Homes, which was founded in 1960.

The second category is concerned with religion, philosophy, and spiritualism, and focuses on Tibetan Buddhism, which has four main schools, namely, 1. Nyingma, 2. Kagyu, 3. Sakya, and, 4. Gelug. These schools provide education through various monasteries based on gender, namely, *Ani Gonpa* (nunnery), and *Gonpa* (monastery). They attract nuns and monks from all over the world. The major monasteries are as follows:

Ani Gonpa-s:

1. Sakya;
2. Nyingma;
3. Drikung;
4. Kagyupa.

Gonpa-s:

1. Mindrolling Monastery/Nyingmapa Mahabuddha Vihara;
2. Drikung Monastery;
3. Sakya Center;
4. Tashi Khyil Monastery;
5. Kagyu Monastery.

Among all the *gonpa-s* in Dehradun, Nyingmapa Mahabuddha Vihara alias the Mindrolling ('Place of Perfect Emancipation') Gonpa¹⁶ enjoys a unique position. It belongs to the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism. Originally Mindrolling was founded in Dra Nang country, some 43 kilometers east of the Lhasa airport, on the south side of the Tsangpo River. It was constructed by Rigzin Terdak Lingpa of the *Nyo* lineage in CE 1676. It was subjected to vandalism in CE 1718 by the Dzungar Mongols from East Turkistan. It was reconstructed under the supervision of Jetsun Migyur Paldon and her brother Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal, the daughter and son of Terdak Lingpa, during the reign of His Holiness, the VII Dalai Lama (CE 1708-1757). In course of time Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal became 'the throne holder of the monastery'. It tutored Nyingma scholars and monks from all over Tibet for nearly 300 years.

At the time His Holiness, the XIV Dalai Lama and some of his ardent followers succeeded in fleeing from Tibet to India in CE 1959, there were some 300 monks in Mindrolling. In the same year, i.e., in CE 1959, when he was 22 years of age. His Eminence Khochhen Rinpoche also escaped from Tibet as one of the seven-member entourage of His Holiness, Mindrolling Trichen Rinpoche to take refuge in India. His Holiness, Mindrolling Trichen, 'the supreme head of Nyingmapas and the throne holder of Mindrolling Monastery, passed away into *parinirvāṇa* in 2008.' In CE 1965, along with some monks His Eminence Khochhen Rinpoche initiated the establishment of the Mindrolling Gonpa at Clement Town, a suburb of Dehradun, (Uttarakhand, India). It is now a flourishing Tibetan monastery in India housing some five hundred monks.

In CE 1991 His Eminence Khochhen Rinpoche established the Ngagyur Nyingma College (Institute of Advanced Buddhist Studies) at Clement Town, which offers a nine-year course of studies in *Buddhadharma* that also includes *Sūtra* and *Tantra*. The graduated scholars are awarded the title of *Khenpo*. His Eminence Khochhen Rinpoche

is the founder director of the Mindrolling Monastery, and President of the Tibetan Community of Clement Town since CE 1987.

Of all the *gonpa*-s in Dehradun, Mindrolling stands apart because it houses the 190 feet high imposing *Lha babs mchod rten* (the Great Stupa of Descent of the Buddha from *Devaloka* or the Stupa of the Thirty-three *Deva*-s), inaugurated in CE 2002 by the then Defence Minister of India, Mr. George Fernandez. The brief description of the Great Stupa of Descent of the Buddha from *Devaloka* in the official flyer (*The Brief History of The Great Stupa of Descent from Devaloka: 2-4*) of the Mindrolling Gonpa reads:

This stupa has been built through the sponsorship of the eminent spiritual guide, Master Ti Ching. It has five main shrine rooms. The shrine room on the ground floor is dedicated to Guru Padmasambhava. The main statue is of Guru Padmasambhava in the form of 'Guru Lakeborn Vajra.' The life-story of the glorious Guru Padmasambhava is painted on the walls in accordance with the terma of Ogyen Lingpa, the Crystal Cave Chronicles [*bKa' thang Shel brag ma*] with the hundred and eight chapters. In addition to this, murals depict the assembly of the Seven Chapter Supplication [*Le'u bDun ma*], the Supplication for clearing Obstacles to the Path [*Barchad Lamsel*], the outer, inner and secret assembly of Heart Essence of Vidyadharas [*Rig'zin thug thigs'*], the short depiction of the past lives of Terchen Jurme Dorje [*Terdag Lingpa*], the One Hundred and Eight Mahasiddhas of India, the Twenty-Five Disciples of Padmasambhava, the One Hundred and Eight Great Treasure Masters, the Eight Great Chariots of the Practice Lineage, and the dharmapalas protecting the dharma.

The shrine room above that is dedicated to Shakyamuni Buddha. The murals on the walls depict the Jataka Stories based on the text Wishfulfilling Tree, written by the dharma king Kshemendra. The sixteen great arhats, the seven entrusted with the teaching, and the seventeen panditas of glorious Nalanda are shown on the pillars.

The shrine room above that contains statues depicting the descendants of the dharma king Terdag Lingpa the Trichens and Khenchens of Mindrolling. A three-dimensional beautifully detailed mandala based on the union of *bKa' ma* and *gter ma* teachings and the dispeller of all obscurations *Lochen Zhikhro* is also in this shrineroom. In addition to these are the paintings of the precious lineage masters of the Pratimoksha, Bodhisattavayana, and Vajrayana.

In the vase enclosure of the stupa are the images of the thousands buddhas of the Good Kalpa. In it are also the statues of the field of accumulation of the *Ati Zabdun sNying po*, from the extraordinary tradition revealed by the embodiment of the collection of all qualities of the three secrets of all the victorious sugatas, Chogyal Terdeg Lingpa,

The Life-force tree is in accordance with the mandala within the tradition of *Drimed mNyam nyi*.

In the shrine room above the vase are the main statues of the buddhas of the five families along with Buddha Amitabha. On the walls are painted the Twelve Teachers of the *Dzogchen* lineage.

Furthermore, the stupa contains the four kinds of relics, numerous extraordinary dharanis, and various old and sacred statues in the form of wisdom deities.

Such a wondrous stupa has been built with great purpose and reason and is the source of immeasurable excellent deeds. This stupa has been built so that the ground of all happiness and benefit in this degenerate age, the doctrine of Shakyamuni Buddha, spreads and flourishes.

It has been built so that the infinitely beneficial activities of teaching and practice of the holders of the doctrine of all lineages and schools of the buddhadharma, led by His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama, flourish utterly in all directions.

It has been constructed to dispel all degenerations, such as sickness, warfare, turmoil, conflict, famine, earthquakes, horrors caused by the four elements, and so forth.

Through seeing, remembering, hearing or coming in contact with this stupa, all being will be progressively ripened and liberated.

Building such a stupa has immeasurable benefit.

Conclusion:

In the introductory section of this essay, based on epigraphic evidence, I have ventured to trace the history of Buddhist activities in Uttarakhand Himalaya from the time of Aśoka the Great. I have also pointed out the possibility of Buddhism penetrating into the adjoining Tibetan provinces of Guge and Purang during that very time, which being almost a millennium before the traditionally held view that Buddhism was introduced in Tibet during the reign of 'Songtsen, the 33rd King of Tibet (617-650 AD)' (Thonḍupa 1976: 9). Interestingly, so far the earliest known inscription mentioning Tibet as 'Bhoṭṭa' (country of the Buddhists) has been issued by the Nepali King Śivadeva in (Nepali) Samvat 119 (CE 695) (Lagantol Inscription, Kathmandu, Regmi 1983: I. 133, line 16; *Ibid* II. 83). It is an open issue whether within 50 years following the end of the reign of Songtsen, Buddhism got so deeply rooted far and wide in Tibet that she was identified as Bhoṭṭa by her neighbouring countries. Alternatively, as I have already suggested, Buddhism was introduced in Tibet during the Mauryan times, it spread steadily over the centuries, and already before the time of Songtsen it was known as the country of the Buddhists.

Interestingly, inscriptional evidence also reveals that at some point of time before tenth century CE Vaishnavism had gained adherence in Western Tibet, especially the region around the Kailāsa, and that the king of Bhoṭa (i.e., Tibet) was also attracted to it. These facts have hitherto not received adequate attention of scholars.

It is indeed enigmatic that despite a hoary antiquity of the Buddhist activities in Uttarakhand Himalaya, Buddhism could not gain ground here. However, Uttarakhand has once again witnessed inspiring Buddhist activities in the same region (i.e., Dehradun) which attracted the attention of the great Mauryan emperor Aśoka some 2,250 years ago.

Significantly, the agents of the Buddhist activities in Dehradun now are the Tibetan Diaspora. Within a short time-period of a half century of their settlement in Uttarakhand, they have created mini Tibetan Buddhist World in the suburbs of Dehradun, which attracts visitors from the world over. The Tibetans have endeared themselves to all alike by their customary mannerism, the affordable stylish wardrobe available in the Tibetan Market, the Tibetan Hospital and Dispensary that also include much sought after herbal cosmetics and tea, and, above all, the Tibetan academic centres of religion, philosophy, and spiritual learning, particularly the Songtsen Library, and the Mindrolling Gonpa. What is central to these institutions is the architecture of their buildings, which is a faithful execution of the original Tibetan style. This, coupled with the spiritual zeal of the *Lama-s* inhabiting these buildings, makes a visitor feel like travelling in the fairy land of sublime bliss that was Tibet under the old regimes.

- 1 Entry into the *garbhagriha* of the Mahasu temple is prohibited. This information is based on the likeness of the enshrined image with the photographs of the Almora Buddha images described in the preceding paragraph (no. 10) as observed by the priest of the Mahasu temple. The photographs of the latter were given by me to Sri Lakshmi Kant Joshi of Tyuni, a research student in History, who showed it to the priest under reference.
- 2 On my personal enquiry, one of the residents of village Jakheta from where this sculpture has been reported, informed me that it was brought from outside by its present owner a few decades ago (in 1960s?).
- 3 I owe this information to Mr. U. S. Rawat, a post-graduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, Dun University, Dehradun.
- 4 I hope to study unpublished Tibetan records from Uttarakhand in near future in collaboration with the Songtsen Library, Dehradun. Similar votive inscriptions are also found in village Mana (District Chamoli, personal communication with Dr. Vijay Bahuguna, Govt. College, Barkot (District Uttarkashi)

- 5 Dr. John Vincent Bellezza, Senior Research Fellow, Tibet Center, University of Virginia, USA, (personal communication), has also suggested, albeit based on his own source-material, somewhat similar antiquity to the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet.
- 6 However, the revenue records of the Raikā kings (the Later Katyūris who ruled Far-western Nepal and Eastern Kumaon), adopted by the Chandra kings of Kumaon from CE 1600 onwards, the only name applied to the people under reference is 'Saukā' (see for details, Joshi 1992).
- 7 See, for example, letter issued by 'Vamśāha' (civil governor of Kumaon under the Gorkha occupation) from Almora, dated VS 1870 (CE 1813), addressed to Girvāṇṇayuddhavikramaśāha, reporting trade related unity between 'Bhotyā' and 'Feraṁgī' (the British). Here the appellation 'Bhotyā' refers to Uttarakhandi 'Bhotiya-s' (see for the original text, Rājaramśī 2023VS: 33-9).
- 8 Lushington to secretary to government. Secret Department. NWP, 10 August 1841: Secret Proc. 23-30, August 1841, no. 29. National Archives of India, New Delhi, cited in Brown (1992).
- 9 Using a vast corpus of archival material Brown (1984; 1992; 1994) has discussed this issue at length from an anthropological perspective. I am also working on its ethnohistorical and archaeological aspects (Joshi: forthcoming).
- 10 Personal communication with Sri Bhavani Singh Panwar, a scion of erstwhile ruling family of Garhwal.
- 11 It is interesting to note that the Tholing Monastery was 'founded in AD 996 by the royal (lha) bla ma Ye shes 'od who is also responsible for the foundation of Tabo' (Jahoda 2007), which date is close to the movement of Lord Badrīnātha (i.e., Viṣṇu) from Tholing to Badrinath as well as the Tibetan king parting with Viṣṇu-Viakunṭha image, and handing it to the Kīra king. Do these traditions indicate prevalence of Vaiṣṇavism in Tibet in the 9th-10th centuries CE, and, if so, some sort of hostility taking place between the followers of Vaiṣṇavism and Buddhism? In that case should it be taken as a reaction to the anti-Buddhist activities in Uttarakhand, first under Saṁkarācārya (late eighth-early ninth centuries CE, see Atkinson 1884: 767-69; Joshi 1989b), and later under the Katyūri king Bhūdeva, resulting in Vaiṣṇavism losing ground in Tibet, and Buddhism in Uttarakhand? In that case originally the Tholing Monastery may have been a Vaiṣṇavite establishment. It is not at odds with Buddhism, for in Viṣṇuism, the Buddha is one of the incarnations of Viṣṇu, and the Tibetan Buddhists may have adopted him, as they did in case of many other Brahmanical deities. I also venture to add here that if the Badrinath image is that of the Buddha, was it deliberately installed there as the Buddha incarnation of Viṣṇu in the Kaliyuga; a fact every Hindu recites while taking saṁkalpa (ritual vow) before the commencement of any ritual; the relevant part of which runs as follows: Om Viṣṇuḥ-Viṣṇuḥ-Viṣṇuḥ namaḥ paramātmāne... Kaliyugasya prathama charaṇe Bauddhāvatāre... Significantly, as I have already mentioned above, in the Mānasakhaṇḍa (24. 19) the Buddha form of Viṣṇu is addressed as 'Mahā-Viṣṇu', thus making him even greater than Viṣṇu.

Interestingly, with the passage of time such memories have totally disappeared from the minds of

people living in Tholing, as will be clear from the following two communications of Corin Goldings, a research scholar, Oxford University, Oxford, U.K. (both by e-mails), who visited Tholing recently (CE 2011) in connection with his research work:

I contacted Dr Roberto Vitali recently, who is an expert on western Tibet and has published on Tholing (especially 'Records of Tho.Ling'). He tells me that, though he has heard mention of the relationship between Badrinath and Tholing from the Indian side, he found no mention of Badrinath in the many records of Tholing that he consulted, which included a large number of administrative documents. He suggests this is not surprising, however, since so many Tibetan historical records have been destroyed. While at Tholing I saw a number of murals which included Ganesha, but as you know, this is not uncommon in Tibetan Buddhist art [dated July 8, 2012].

I was able to talk to some older gentlemen who remembered the days when traders would come from Niti and Mana valleys, but apart from a few anecdotes there is not much to share [dated July 10, 2012].

- 12 It may be noted here that each of the establishments mentioned here offers a vast scope for research.
- 13 This information is based on a flier titled: Songtsen Library: Center for Tibetan & Himalayan Studies, supplemented by Mr. Yeshe Ngodup, Librarian, Songtsen Library, Dehradun.
- 14 I am indebted to Dr. Sonam Lhamo, ex In-charge, for the information summarily reproduced here. Despite her busy schedule, she was kind enough to grant me an interview without any prior appointment.
- 15 I owe this information to Mr. Tenzin of the Tibetan Welfare Society, and rev. Kunga Lama of the Mindrolling Monastery.
- 16 This section draws mainly on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventh_Dalai_Lama, and information supplied by rev. Kunga Lama of the Mindrolling Gonpa.

Bibliography:

- Aldenderfer, Mark. 2007. Defining Zhang Zhung ethnicity: an archaeological perspective from far western Tibet. In: Amy Heller and Giacomella Orefino (eds.) Discoveries in Western Tibet and the Western Himalayas. Essays on History Literature, Archaeology and Art: 1-17. Leiden: Brill.
- ARIE Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy. Reference year cited in parenthesis.
- Atkinson, E.T. 1884; 1886. Gazetteer of the Himalayan Districts of the North Western Provinces of India. Vol. II (1884), Vol. III (1886). Allahabad: N.W. Provinces and Oudh Press.
- Beal, Samuel. 1884. Si-yu-ki. Buddhist Records of the Western World, Translated from the Chinese of Hieun Tsiang (A.D. 629). London: Trübner & Co.
- Brown, Charles W. 1984. "The Goat is Mine, the Load is Yours": Morphogenesis of "Bhotiya-Shauka", U.P., India. Lund Studies in Social Anthropology No. 1. Lund: University of Lund.

- _____.1992. "What we call 'Bhotias' are in reality not Bhotias". In: Maheshwar P. Joshi, Allen C. Fanger, and Charles W. Brown (eds.), *Himalaya: Past and Present*, Volume II: 147-72. Almora: Shree Almora Book Depot.
- _____.1994. Salt, barley, pashmina and tincal contexts of being Bhotiya in Traill's Kumaon. In: Maheshwar P. Joshi, Allen C. Fanger, and Charles W. Brown (eds.), *Himalaya: Past and Present*, Volume III: 215-58. Almora: Shree Almora Book Depot.
- Chhabra, B. Ch.1957 (1994). *Antiquities of Chamba State, Part II. Mediaeval and Later Inscriptions with 33 Plates*. Reprinted. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India.
- Cunningham, Alexander. 1854. *The Bhilsa Topes or, Buddhist Monuments of Central India: Comprising a Brief Historical Sketch of the Rise, Progress, and Decline of Buddhism; With an account of the opening and examination of the various groups of Topes around Bhilsa*. London: Smith, Elder and Co.
- Dimri, D.N. 2012. *Gopeshwar: Mirror of the Art of Uttarakhand (Himalaya)*. New Delhi: Kaveri Books.
- Fonia, R.S. In press. *Explorations in Himalaya*. New Delhi: Aryan Books International.
- Francke, A.H. 1994 (1926). *Antiquities of Indian Tibet, Part II*. Edited with Foreword by F.W. Thomas. Reprinted. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India.
- IAR Indian Archaeology A Review. Reference year cited in parenthesis.
- Jahoda, Christian.2007. Socio-economic organisation of village communities and monasteries in Spiti, H.P., India: the Case of a religious administrative unit (chos gzhis). In: Amy Heller and Giacomella Orofino (eds.) *Discoveries in Western Tibet and the Western Himalayas. Essays on History Literature, Archaeology and Art*: 215-40. Leiden: Brill.
- Jošī, Kṛishṇā Nanda. 1982. *Rupahale Śikharon ke Sunahare svara*. Bareilly: Prakāśa Buka Dipo.
- Joshi, Maheshwar P.1989a. Morphogenesis of Kuṇindas (cir. 200 B.C. - cir. A.D. 300): A Numismatic Overview. Almora: Shree Almora Book Depot.
- _____.1989b. Śaṅkarāchārya, Lakulīśa Pāśupatas and Uttarākhaṇḍa. *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, LXX: 266-72.
- _____.1992. Economic resource management in the Kumaon of the Chandras. In: Maheshwar P. Joshi, Allen C. Fanger and Charles W. Brown (eds.), *Himalaya: Past and Present*, Vol II: 239-69. Almora: Shree Almora Book Depot.
- _____.2009. The riddle of Aśoka Challa. In: Devangana Desai and Arundhati Banerji (eds.), *Kalādarpaṇa: The Mirror of Indian Art, Essays in Memory of Shri Krishna Deva*: 353-60. New Delhi: Aryan Books International.
- _____.Forthcoming. Uttarākhaṇḍa ke Sāhasika Vyāpārī 'Bhoṭiyā' Paramparā kā Āvishkāra.
- Joshi, Maheshwar P. and Charles W. Brown.1987. Some dynamics of Indo-Tibetan trade through Uttarākhaṇḍa (Kumaon-Garhwal), India. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, XXX: 303-17.

- Kāthocha, Yaśavarīta Sīmha. 1981. *Madhya Himālaya kā Purātattva*. Lucknow: The Author.
- _____. 2003. *Madhya Himālaya kī Kalā (eka vāstuśāstrīya adhyayana)*. Dehradun: Winsor Publishing Company.
- Kedārakhaṇḍam (with Hindi translation), Śivānanda Nautīyāla (translated), 1994. Prayāga: Hindī Sāhitya Sammelana.
- Kielhorn, F. 1892. Stone inscription of Yaśovarman, of the year 1011 (A.D. 953-54). *Epigraphia Indica*, 1: 122-35.
- Kraaijenbrink, Thirsa, Emma J. Parkin, Denise R. Carvalho-Silva, George L. van Driem, Guido Barbujani, Chris Tyler-Smith, Mark A. Jobling, Peter de Knijff. 2009. Genetic and linguistic borders in the Himalayan Region. In: Francesco d'Errico and Jean-Marie Hombert (eds.). *Becoming Eloquent: Advances in the emergence of language, human cognition, and modern cultures*: 181-201. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Leitch, Keith A. 2008. The rise and decline of Buddhism in Central Asia. In: Shanker Thapa (ed.), *Northern Buddhism in History*: 109-35. Kathmandu: Vajra Publications.
- Meissner, Konrad. 1985. *Mālushāhī and Rājulā. A Ballad from Kumāūn (India) as Sung by Gopī Dās (in three parts). Part I, Kumāūnī text, translation and appendices*. Neuindische Studien, 10. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz. *Mānasakhaṇḍa (A Portion of Skandapurāṇa)*, edited and translated in Hindi with notes by Gopal Datt Pandey (1989). Varanasi: Shri Nityanand Smarak Samiti.
- Moorcroft, William and George Trebeck. 1841. *Travels in the Himalayan Province of Hindustan and the Punjab in Laddakh and Kashmir in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz and Bokhara; by Mr. William Moorcroft and Mr. George Trebeck from 1819 to 1825 Vol. I. Prepared for the Press, from original Journals and correspondence by Horace Hayman Wilson (in two volumes)*. London: John Murray.
- Motīchandra. 1966. *Sārthavāha [Prāchīna Bhārata kī Patha-paddhati]*. Second revised edition. Paṭanā: Bihāra-Rāshṭrabhāshā-Parishad.
- Nautiyal, K.P. 1969. *The Archaeology of Kumaon including Dehradun*. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Prakashan.
- Nautiyal, K.P. and B.M. Khanduri. 1986. New cultural dimension in the Central Himalayan region of Uttarakhand. *An archaeological assessment, Annali*, 46: 76-100.
- _____. 1989. Excavation of a Vedic brick altar at Purola, district Uttarkashi, Central Himalaya. *Puratattva*, 19: 68-9.
- Pande, Ram Niwas. 1997. *Making of Modern Nepal: A Study of History, Art and Culture of the Principalities of Western Nepal*. New Delhi: Nirala.
- Pandey, Gopal Datt (ed.). 1989. *Manasakhanda (A Portion of Skandapurana)*. Varanasi: Shri Nityanand Smarak Samiti.
- Panta, Jayarāja. 2064 VS. *Śaileśvarī Mahātmya ra Tinakā Kehī Gīta. Kāthmāḍaun: Vāṇmaya Prakāśana tathā Anussandhāna Kendra*.

- Pant, Mahes Raj. 2009. Towards a history of the Khasa empire. In: Marie Lecomte-Tilouine (ed.), *Bards and Mediums: History, Culture and Politics in the Central Himalayan Kingdoms*: 293-326. Almora: Almora Book Depot.
- Prinsep, James. 1838. Ancient Inscriptions, IV. *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, VII: 1056-58 (text); 1058-60 (translation by Saroda Prashad).
- Rājavarṁśī, Śaṁkaramāna (ed.). 2023 VS. Śāhakālīna Aitihāsika Chitṭhīpatra Saṁgraha (Bhāga 1). Purātattva Prakāśanamālā 35. Kāṭhamāḍaurṁ: Vīrapustakālaya.
- Ram, Pati. 1992 (1916). Garhwal: Ancient and Modern. Reprinted. Gurgaon: Vintage Books.
- Regmi, D.R. 1983. *Inscriptions of Ancient Nepal*, Volume I, Text, Volume II, Translation. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications.
- Rhys Davids, T.W. 2010. *Buddhist India*. Reprinted. Delhi: Low Price Publications.
- Saṁkṛityāyana, Rāhula. 1953. *Himālaya Parichaya 1*, Gaḍhavāla. Vārāṇasī: Jñānamaṇḍala.
- 1958 (2015 V.S.). *Kumāūrṁ. Vārāṇasī: Jñānamaṇḍala*.
- Schuh, Dieter. 1994. Investigations in the history of the Muktinath Valley and adjacent areas. *Ancient Nepal*, 137: 9-91.
- Sherring, Charles A. 1906. *Western Tibet and the British Borderland: the sacred country of Hindus and Buddhists with an account of the government, religion and customs of its peoples*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Shukla, Bhawani Shanker. 1988. Buddhism and Buddhist antiquities in Uttarakhand. *Bulletin of Museums and Archaeology in U.P.*, 41-42: 65-72.
- Songtsen Library: Center for Tibetan & Himalayan Studies. Not dated. Dehradun: Songtsen Library.
- Thoṇḍupa, Tulku. 1976. *Tibbatī Pāṭhamālā. Sāranātha: Kendriya Tibbatī Uchcha Śikshā Saṁsthāna*.
- Tilman, H.W. 1952. *Nepal Himalaya*. Cambridge: At the University Press.
- Thapar, R. 1977. *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*. Second Edition, second impression. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- The Brief History of The Great Stupa of Descent from Devaloka. Dehradun: Mindrolling Monastery.
- Tucci, Giuseppe. 1956. Preliminary Report on Two Scientific Expeditions in Nepal. Rome: Is. M.E.O.
- Wilson, Horace Hayman. 1841. Preface. In: *Travels in the Himalayan Province of Hindustan and the Punjab in Laddakh and Kashmir in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz and Bokhara; by Mr. William Moorcroft and Mr. George Trebeck from 1819 to 1825. Prepared for the Press, from original Journals and correspondence by Horace Hayman Wilson (in two volumes)*. Vol. I: xiii-lvi. London: John Murray.

A Rare Image of Mahishāsuramardīnī from Bachoonch, Himachal Pradesh

Devendra Handa*

Mahishāsuramardīnī, literally meaning 'the crusher of the buffalo demon', is one of the earliest and most important manifestations of Durgā in her ferocious form. The story of her birth and exploits is narrated in various Purāṇas like the Agni, Brahmāṇḍa, DevīBhāgavata, Matsya, Skanda, Vāyu, Viṣṇu, etc.¹ The Vāmana Purāṇa (chapters 17-20) gives a detailed account of the destruction of Mahishāsurā at the hands of Devī. Gods, having been defeated by the demon Mahisha, approached Viṣṇu under the leadership of Brahmā, for protection. Śaṅkara was also present there. On hearing the grievances of the gods, Viṣṇu, and at his command Brahmā, Śiva and all other gods emitted flames of anger from their eyes and faces as a result of which a mountain of effulgence was formed. From this mountain came forth profusely resplendent eighteen-armed goddess Kātyāyanī whom Śiva gave a trident, Viṣṇu a disc, Varuṇa a conch, Agni a dart, Yama an iron rod, Vāyu a bow, Sūrya a quiver and arrows, Indra a thunderbolt and bell, Kubera a mace, Brahmā a rosary and water-pot, Kāla a sword and shield, Viśvakarma a battle-axe and other weapons, Himavān a lion, Śeshanāga a nāgahāra (serpentine necklace), etc. Other gods also gave her various arms and ornaments. Kātyāyanī then proceeded to the Vindhya mountain where Chanda and Munda saw her and reported about her beauty to their king Mahishāsurā. Having heard high encomiums of her splendid and beautiful form the demon king determined to obtain her and marched with his army to the vicinity of the mountain from where he sent Dundubhi, his grandson, as messenger. Devī told him that she would marry the demon Mahisha if he vanquished her in combat. A severe battle ensued in which the whole army was routed and killed but the demon-king, because of a boon granted by Śiva, had been rendered invulnerable. Seeing that the army had been destroyed, the demon advanced for a personal combat.² Ultimately, during the terrible duel, Durgā dismounted from her lion and jumped upon the back of Mahisha and pierced his neck with the trident by the right hand while trampling on his back

*Prof.(Retd) Punjab University, Chandigarh, 1401, PUSH PAC Complex, Sector 49 B, Chandigarh 160 047.

with her right leg.³ It is this incident of the combat which is very popular in Indian art.⁴ Her victory over the demon Mahisha is regarded as symbolic of the triumph of virtue over evil.⁵ Rao thinks that the story indicates the substitution of the buffalo totem worship by a form of Devī worship among some early primitive tribes in the country.⁶ The Mahābhārata, besides the Purāṇas as referred to above, especially the Mārkaṇḍeya, also narrate the exploits of Devī.⁷

Though the antiquity of her images has been traced back to the pre-Kushāṇa times⁸, yet her cult seems to have become popular in north India during the Kushāṇa period as evidenced by quite a few terracotta and stone plaques and statuettes found from the Mathura region.⁹ It is interesting to note that in the earliest reliefs the goddess has only two or four hands and is shown as subduing the buffalo demon by sheer physical force - by compressing the throat of the animal or pulling out its tongue by one hand and pressing its back by the other. Stunted spear or trident is her principal weapon which she holds in one or two of her additional hands.¹⁰ Six or more handed varieties of the Kushāṇa images of Mahishamardinī are also known.¹¹ Lion as the vehicle of the goddess, though absent initially, makes its appearance in the late Kushāṇa period¹² but does not become an essential adjunct of her images till the early medieval period. If present, it was depicted as a docile animal. During the Gupta period, the goddess is generally shown as pressing the back of the buffalo with her right or left foot and piercing it with a long handled spear or trident held in her principal right hand. The next stage of development of the Mahishāsūramardinī images in northern India is beautifully described in the Devī-Māhātmya of the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa¹³ assignable to the seventh century CE if not earlier.¹⁴ When the demon emerged in anthropomorphic form out of the severed neck of the buffalo, the goddess slew him with her sword. This form of the goddess has been very popular with the artists from circa eighth century CE onwards.¹⁵

Images showing the duel between the goddess and the anthropomorphic Mahisha with the complete absence of the demon in animal form are extremely rare. The known examples include an eight-handed goddess as crushing the demon with her foot on his back and piercing him with a trident from the Ambikā Temple at Jagat in Rajasthan (tenth century) and another similar four-handed

Mahishamardinī in the principal back niche of the miniature shrine of the Tirthodaka Tank built to store the sacred water coming out of the main sanctum of the Ambikā temple towards the north.¹⁶ A crude statue of this type exists on the exterior wall of the twelfth century Śiva Temple at Menal near Chittore. These examples led R.C. Agrawala to observe that "this unusual motif was introduced in Mewar under art-contacts with Rāṣṭakūṭa traditions through Madhya Pradesh."¹⁷

We may also refer to the Mahishamardinī reliefs from Bhubaneshwar¹⁸ and Mahābalipuram¹⁹ where Devī is shown as fighting hybrid Mahishāsura having the face of a buffalo on a human body. An image from Kanchipuram datable to eighth century is now preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi and shows anthropomorphic Mahisha having horns on the head.²⁰

Village Bachoonch, 9 km northeast of Rohru on the left bank of the Shikri nullah, a tributary of the river Pabbar in the snowy Spail valley in the apple-belt of district Shimla, Himachal Pradesh (Fig. 1), which is famous for its Bhoonda mahāyajña (Narmedha)²¹ performed in 2005 at the old Bondra Temple, has one such rare image, 40.2 X 21.2 cm in size, showing Mahishāsoramardinī standing in ālīḍha pose with her left foot planted



Plate-I

firmly on the ground and the

right one pressing the calf of the stretched right leg of the anthropomorphic demon (Pl. I).²² The goddess has felled the demon (nipātita) by piercing the long-handled trident with her natural right hand into his right upper arm and holds with her natural left hand his tuft as he tries to wield the scimitar with his right hand. His left leg is folded and his left hand rests on the respective thigh to support the retrogress bust under the pressure



Figure 1, Map of Bachoonch

wielded by the goddess who supports a sword in her additional right hand with which she is ready to cut his head (mahāsinā). Her rear left hand holds a bell or perhaps a noose. She bears dhammilla type of coiffure with strands of beads and wears bejeweled earrings, armlets, wristlets, necklace with pendent falling from between the round breasts, nether garment secured by a simple waistband, anklets, etc. Two small holes on the sides of the coiffure seem to have been meant for putting the flowers or inserting incense sticks for worship. It is difficult to say whether they were carved originally or done later. The facial expression is that of quietude indicating the ease with which she subdued the demon. The semi-circular top of the back slab serves the purpose of the gloriole also. The demon is also shown as wearing a torque, ear ornaments, dhotī, etc. Stylistically this four-armed image may be dated to seventh or early eighth century CE and may well be compared with almost coeval Mahishamardinī image from Doghi in district Una, Himachal Pradesh, now preserved in the State Museum, Shimla (Pl. II).²³ The latter example differs only in depicting the demon in animal form otherwise the stance of the goddess, her attributes, ornaments, expression, etc. seem to be quite similar. We thus see that in Himachal Pradesh there existed the tradition of depicting the demon in animal as well as anthropomorphic form in the early medieval period.

The lion is absent in the Bachoonch and Doghi images whereas the Ambikā Temple image shows the lion attacking the anthropomorphic demon. The goddess from Bachoonch is not standing on the severed buffalo head as noticed in South India during the Pallava and Chola periods at Mamallapuram, Tanjore, etc. nor does the anthropomorphic demon bear the horns on the head as seen in the representations at Emora and Pattadakal.²⁴

We thus see that the Bachoonch image is an interesting example of



Plate-2

Mahishamardini which depicts the goddess as killing the demon Mahisha purely in his anthropomorphic form without her vehicle lion. This form seems to have evolved independently in Himachal Pradesh during seventh-eighth century by an innovative artist of the region.

Notes and References :-

1. Agni Purāṇa, chs. 17-20; Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa II.19, 40-41; DevīBhāgavata, LXVI.8-21 & 29-38; Matsya Purāṇa 122.59-60; Skanda Purāṇa, Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa, LXXXIII.20-21; Arbuda-khaṇḍa, XXXVI.152-53; Nāgara-khaṇḍa, CXVII. CXXI; Vāyu Purāṇa 49.37; Viṣṇu Purāṇa II.4, 27; etc.
2. Rao, T.A.G. 1958, Elements of Hindu Iconography, Vol. I (reprint, New Delhi), p. 366.
3. Cf. Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, Devī-Māhātmya (III.37).
4. Banerjea, J.N. 1956, Development of Hindu Iconography, Calcutta, p. 498.
5. East and West, New Series, Vol. XIX, Nos. 3-4, p. 420; Cf. Padma Purāṇa I.35.
6. Rao, op. cit., I, p. 354.
7. Ibid, pp. 348 ff. The Mahābhārata, however, calls Śiva also as Mahishaghna (Sorensen, S. 1978, An Index to the Names in the Mahābhārata, reprint, Delhi, p. 458) and describes Kārttikeya too as the destroyer of Mahisha (Vana Parva, chapter 231).
8. Agrawala, R.C., "Some Sculptures of Durga Mahishasuramardini from Rajasthan," Brahma Vidya, New Series, Adyar, Vol. 19, Nos.1-2, pp. 37-46; "A Terracotta plaque of Mahishamardini from Nagar," Lalit Kala, Nos. 1-2 (1955-56), p. 73; "The Goddess Mahisasuramardini in Early Indian Art," Artibus Asiae, Vol. XXI (1958), no. 2, pp. 124-27, Figs. 1-2; Hartel, H., "Some Results of the Excavation at Sonkh; A Preliminary Report," in German Scholars on India, Vol. II, Bombay, 1976, pp. 74-78 and 92, Figs. 10-36; De, Gourishankar, "The Earliest Mahishamardini Image of India," paper presented at the 42nd Annual Session of the Indian History Congress, Bodh Gaya, 1981; Mukherjee, B.N., "Foreign Elements in Iconograph of Mahishasuramardini. - The War Goddess of India," Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlndischen Gesellschaft, Supplement VI, Vom 21, Bis 25, Marz 1983, pp. 406-08; etc.
9. Vogel, J. Ph. 1910, Catalogue of the Archaeological Museum at Mathura,

- Allahabad, p. 97; Agrawala, V.S., "Mathura Terracottas," The Journal of the United Provinces Historical Society, Lucknow, Vol. IX, Part II (1936), pp. 32 ff., Fig.47 and 53; "A Catalogue of the Brahmanical Images in Mathura Art," Ibid, Vol. XXII, 1949, p. 158; Viennot, Odette, "The Goddess Mahishasuramardini in Kushana Art," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XIX, nos. 3-4 (1956), pp. 368-73, Fig. 1; Agrawala, R.C. (1958), op. cit, pp.124-27; "Mahisamardini Plaque in the Gurukul Museum at Jhajjar, Haryana" in *Ajaya-Śrī: Recent Studies in Indology* (Prof. Ajay Mitra Shastri Felicitation Volume), Vol. II, Delhi (1989), pp. 397-98, pl. 52; Hartel (1956), op. cit, p. 92, Fig. 36; Mitterwallner, Gritli Von, "The Kusana Type of the Goddess Mahisasuramardini As Compared to the Gupta and Medieval Types" in *German Scholars on India*, Vol. II (1976), Fig. 1-3; Czuma, S.J. 1985, *Kushana Sculpture - Images from Early India*, Cleveland, pp. 105-06; Mukherjee (1983), op. cit., Figs. 3-9.
10. Hartel (1976), op. cit., Fig. 36; Mitterwallner, op. cit., Figs. 1-3; Mukherjee (1983), op. cit., p. 406, Figs. 3-7.
 11. Agrawala, R.C. (1958), op. cit., p.123; (1989), op. cit., pp. 397-98, Pl. 52; Mukherjee (1983), op. cit., Fig. 7.
 12. Mitterwallner (1976), op. cit., p. 205.
 13. *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, Vaṅgavāsī Steam Press, Calcutta, Ch.83, vv, 37-39:
 Evamuktva samutapatya sārūḍhā taṃ mahāsuram /
 Pādenākramya kaṇṭhe cha śūlenainamatādayat //
 Tataḥ so'pi pādākrāntastayā nijamukhāttataḥ /
 Arddhanishkrānta eveti devyā vīryena saṃvṛitaḥ //
 Arddhanishkrānta evāsau yudhyamāno mahāsurāḥ /
 Tayā mahāsinā devyā śiraśchhittvā nipātitaḥ //
 14. Desai, Nileshvari Y. 1968, *Ancient Indian Society, Religion and Mythology as depicted in the Markandeya Purana: A Critical Study*, Baroda, pp. 3-4.
 15. Seshadri, M., "Mahishasuramardini", *Half-Yearly Journal of the Mysore University, Mysore, Section A - Art*, Vol. XXII, no. 2 (1963), pp. 1-28 & Pls. 1-43.
 16. Soundara Rajan, K.V., "Devī Cult Nucleus at Jagat, Rajasthan", *Vishveshvaranand Indological Journal, Hoshiarpur*, Vol. I (1963), pp. 130-40, Pl. IV; Agrawala, R.C., "Khajuraho of Rajasthan : The Ambikā at Jagat", *Arts*

- Asiatiques, Paris, Vol. X (1964), pp. 43-65 and plates; "Devī Cult at Jagat, A Review", VIJ, Vol. III, Part ii (1965), pp. 282-85, Pl. IV; "A Rare Mahiṣamardini Relief in the National Museum", East and West, Vol. XVI (1966), pp. 109-11, fig. 5. Another sculpture in the same temple depicts the demon in a standing posture attacking the goddess with a sword while his other hand is held by the goddess. See also Vashistha, Neelima, *Sculptural Traditions of Rajasthan*, Jaipur-Indore, 1989, p. 140, Pl. LI.
17. Agrawala, R.C. (1965), op. cit., pp. 284-85.
 18. Munshi, K.M. 1956, *Saga of Indian Sculpture*, Bombay, Pl. 146.
 19. Ibid, Pl. 84. A beautiful sculpture from the Virūpāksha Temple at Paṭṭaḍkal also the demon is depicted as bearing the horns on the head [Agrawala (1966), loc. cit., fig. 2].
 20. Agrawala (1966), op. cit., p. 110, fig. 4. I am thankful to Shri Agrawala for kindly supplying the details and references. See also Seshadri, op. cit., Pls. 17 ff. A Mahiṣamardini figure showing the goddess killing the demon having human body and buffalo's head with a lion also present in the relief has been illustrated by Ray and Alphen (Ray, R. and Jan Van Alphen (2007), *TEJAS: Eternal Energy 1500 Years of Indian Art*, New Delhi: Roli Books, p. 190).
 21. Bhoonda mahāyajña is a sort of death-defying rope trick held in Himachal Pradesh to propitiate the local deities who ring out evil spirits and ring in goodwill and prosperity for the villagers. It is performed in the following manner: A man belonging to the Beda (low caste) community is chosen and is housed in the village temple for three months prior to the ceremony. During this period, he weaves a rope one end of which is tied to the pillar on the top of the hill and the other to another pillar, at the bottom of the same hill. On the fixed day a procession of the local gods of surrounding villages is brought out ceremoniously which is led by the Beda into the temple where he sacrifices a goat. The procession then returns to the spot where the Bhoonda is to be performed. The Beda seated on a woolen seat laid on the rope with bags of sand suspended on both sides to keep it balanced is then pushed from the top of the hill. His survival depends purely on chance. If the Beda survives he gets gifts from the temple and the observers and if he dies his widow is given cash, jewellery and gifts for

sustenance. After this ceremony, the Beda man is deified and is carried in a palanquin of the presiding deity to the temple complex, where hundreds of lambs are slaughtered to propitiate the devīs and other spirits and the villagers and guests share the divine Bhoonda feast at dinner. The villagers believe that gods have accepted the Bhoonda sacrifice and will ward off evil spells that arrive in the form of epidemics, natural calamities or even crop failures. The British had banned the Bhoonda but it has been revived now with safety measures and has become a part of the cultural heritage of the people.

22. I am thankful to Shri Hari Chauhan, Curator of the State Museum, Shimla for bringing this image to my notice and also providing its scan for publication.
23. Acc. No. 83.146. Ohri, V.C., *Sculpture of the Western Himalayas (History and Stylistic Development)*, Delhi, 1991, Pl. 6.12. Sethi, S.M. (*A Catalogue of Stone Sculptures in the Museums of Himachal Pradesh, Shimla*, p. 29 and fig. 15) dates it to seventh century CE. A beautiful early eighth century brass image worshipped as Lakṣhaṇādevī in a temple at Brahmaur in Chamba (Himachal Pradesh) differs from the Doghi Mahishamardinī only in swapping the attributes of her principal and additional right hands but is otherwise quite similar as also is the ninth century stone image of the goddess from Jagatsukh near Kullu but for the depiction of lion as well (Ohri, op. cit., Pls. 4.63 and 2.26). A four handed seventh century stone image of the goddess from Lakhamandal in Uttarakhand also shows her in similar stance but the upper left hand holds the shield in stead of the bell as noticed in Himachal examples (Ibid, Pl. 7.12).
24. Seshadri, loc. cit.; Agrawala (1966), op. cit., figs. 1-4.

Matsya Avatāra The Fish Incarnation of Vishṇu: Observations on Some Stone Images from Chamba, Himachal Pradesh

Ashvini Agrawal*

In the Hindu trinity of gods - Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva, Vishṇu often occupies the position of the supreme being, from the very beginning. As early as in the time of the R̥gveda he is glorified as the god who measured the entire universe with his three strides and is described as Urugaya, Vikrama and Urukrama¹. All creatures are said to have abided in his three strides. He is fully developed, youthful god with shining steps² and is infallible³. This appears to be the earliest allusion to Viśvarūpa and Trivikrama forms of Vishṇu that became so popular later on. Though Varuṇa and Indra seem to have given a tough competition to Vishṇu for supremacy amongst gods in the early Vedic period yet the latter emerged as the most powerful and venerated god in the later Vedic age and his position got further strengthened with the passage of time. Glimpses of his exalted position are found aplenty in the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa. However, it was in the Purāṇic literature that a complex web was woven around his personality containing numerous stories of this supreme god from that of a creator to preserver of the good and destroyer of the evil. With these stories came into existence numerous forms of Vishṇu along with the concept of avatāravāda or incarnations in various forms⁴ from time to time. Generally speaking ten incarnations of Vishṇu are popularly known viz. Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Nṛsiṃha, Vāmana, Paśurāma, Rāma Dāśarathī, Balarāma, Buddha and Kalki, the last being the future incarnation that is yet to come. But the actual figure is much larger as some times twelve, fifteen, sixteen or even more forms are mentioned in some of the Purāṇas. For instance, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa⁵ refers to twenty two incarnations of Vishṇu. Even where the number of incarnations is confined to ten some forms are replaced by others, such as Vāmana becomes Dattātreyā, Balarāma is replaced by Kṛishṇa or Buddha is replaced by Balarāma and so on. About the concept of incarnations, several scholars have expressed their views from time to time. One such view traces the concept to biological evolution of mankind from the aquatic (fish) to amphibian (tortoise) to herbivorous (boar) to the combination of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic (Man-lion). Then came the anthropomorphic forms in the process of development from dwarf (Vāmana) to the righteous warrior (Paśurāma), the protector of ideals (Rāma), the agriculturist (Balarāma) and the intellectual or philosopher (Buddha)⁶. Each of these incarnations had a different story attached to it and many a time more than one story is found to explain an incarnation in the Purāṇic literature.

The first incarnation of Vishṇu was Matsya avatāra. According to the Matsya Purāṇa Vishṇu appeared in the form of a small safari fish in the palm of Manu Vaivasvata when the latter was offering oblations of water and requested him for protection. Manu put him in his vase (kamaṇḍalu). The fish grew very fast and Manu had to shift him in quick succession from the vase to pot, a pond, a lake, the river Gaṅgā and ultimately to the ocean. By this time the sage had realized that it was no ordinary fish but the supreme god himself. On being recognized, Vishṇu forewarned Manu about the impending deluge on the earth when everything shall be submerged in water. At that time a divine boat shall appear. He instructed Manu to board this boat along with all creatures and seeds of all types and tie it with the snake in the form of rope to the horn of the giant fish that will appear at the time. The fish was none else but Vishṇu himself⁷. Thus came the fish incarnation of Vishṇu. This story with minor variations is contained in several of the Purāṇas such as the Agni Purāṇa⁸, the Bhāgavata⁹, etc. This story clearly emerged from that of the Great Deluge contained in almost all ancient religious scriptures of the world. In Indian literature the earliest allusion to it is to be found in the Atharvaveda¹⁰. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa¹¹ and the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka¹² provide the first clear account of the story of great deluge¹³. But here it is associated with Prajāpati rather than Vishṇu. Even the story contained in the Mahābhārata¹⁴ refers to Prajāpati and not Vishṇu¹⁵.

The iconography of Matsya avatāra developed from these stories finds mention in the texts like the Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa¹⁶ and the Rūpamaṇḍana¹⁷ wherein it is said that the Matsya avatāra of Vishṇu should be made in its natural form. Though images are found in two forms of fish incarnation, zoomorphic and in the combination of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic yet it is the first form that is generally described in the texts. In the latter form the upper half of the image is shown in human form with four hands carrying the usual attributes of Vishṇu the mace, conch, disc and lotus, whereas the lower half is made as the tail end of fish¹⁸. No sculpture in this form is known from Himachal Pradesh though we have a couple of images of Matsya avatāra in the form of fish from Baijnath and Chamba. There are two images from Baijnath, one fixed in a niche in the outer wall of the Vaidyanath temple that may be assigned to circa twelfth century CE. The other from the same complex, now preserved in the collection of the Archaeological Survey of



Plate-I

India at Baijnath, seems to be earlier and stylistically may be assigned to 10th-11th century CE.

Chamba, which is known for a largest number of exquisite pieces of art and epigraphs in Himachal Pradesh, has yielded a couple of images of Vishṇu in Matsya avatāra. One beautiful image that has found its way across the ocean is in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art in the U.S.A. It was published long ago by Stella Kramrisch¹⁹. The image (Plate I) shows a large fish with scales and fins in upward movement supported by a lotus flower which stems from a double lotus in the centre at the bottom of the panel. A seated female figure on a lotus pedestal with hands folded in worshipful posture wearing an elegant crown holding a lotus flower with stalk above her shoulder is shown just below the head of the fish. She has been identified as Lakshmī. Another figure standing on lotus with a graceful headdress and an uttarīya on the shoulders having some indistinct round objects in the right hand while the left hand rests on the waist is shown just above the tail of the fish. Kramrisch has doubtfully identified as Bhūdevī or the donor. However, none appears to be correct identification. Bhūdevī is always depicted either between the feet of Vishṇu or on his side at the bottom but never above him. On the other hand had it been the image of the donor it should have been shown with folded hands and not akimbo. Though admittedly the figure is too indistinct for certain identification yet the place and posture of the figure and the round objects in the right hand may suggest it to be the image of the Rājarishi Satyavrata (Manu Vaivasvata) who was directed by Vishṇu to board the boat with all seeds of grains and micro forms of living beings at the time of the great flood²⁰. From the lotus at the centre bottom rises a pillar with patralatā²¹ design, representing the axis mundi of the earth. On its lotus based capital is shown the seated figure of three headed Brahmā. Four other figures, seated in abhaya mudrā, on the lotus-capitals supported by the branches of the same lotus tree, two on each side of Brahmā are shown. Stella Kramrisch²² has simply called them “deities” without offering any identification. Kalpana Desai²³, in the context of another similar image from Garhwa, too has called the identification of the four figures as “rather difficult” and thinks of the sages who are said to have accompanied Manu in the boat. The identification, however, is not difficult. The story contained in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa²⁴ tells that when at the end of the manvāntara Brahmā, the creator, fell asleep, the four Vedas fell out of his mouth and were stolen by the demon Hayagrīva. After the great deluge was over, the demon was killed by god Vishṇu and the Vedas were restored to Brahmā. It is the personified images of the four Vedas which are shown on the sides of Brahmā in abhaya mudrā. Two miniature shrines with nāgara style śikhara are

shown on each side of the figures at the top. The image has been rightly assigned to circa 11th century CE that corresponds well with the image from Baijnath referred to above.

Another image of Matsya avatāra, which may be assigned to the same period as the one discussed above, in the collection of Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba was published by Kalpana Desai²⁵. She dismissed its description in just one sentence without giving any details of the same. The image was again described in brief by S. M. Sethi²⁶ who assigned it to the 17th century CE²⁷. In a more recent publication the same author has rightly assigned it to 11th-12th century CE²⁸ but has



Plate-II

missed most of the features in the description at both the places. The image depicts a beautifully carved fish with scales and fins supported on an ornate lotus emanating from the central lotus stem in the centre at the bottom. The diagonal position of the fish gives the impression of rising from the bottom to the surface of the ocean. From the central stem also rises a pillar with variegated scrolls having a full-blown lotus capital on which the bearded image of Brahmā is shown seated. From his lower right hand onward he carries akshamālā, struva, book and pot respectively in his four hands as described in the texts²⁹. On both sides of Brahmā are shown seated on lotus capitals supported by stems rising from the centre the personified images of the four Vedas in abhaya mudrā, two on each side. Since a portion on the top left of the image is now broken (Plate II), the two figures on that side and part of Brahmā as also a standing figure below have gone missing. Most of the missing portion, except the upper part of the last figure on the top, can be seen in the photograph given by Kalpana Desai (Plate III). At the bottom on both sides of the central stem within the round foliated branches of the lotus are shown two charming figures of dancing Gandharvas playing on lutes. The lower halves of their bodies are those of mythical birds and the upper halves are human.

Of great interest are the two standing female figures, one below the mouth of the fish and the other above its tail. Both the figures are shown standing on lotus flowers with

stems in dvi-bhaṅga posture. They wear triple pointed crowns, jewellery and saris in a very graceful style. Both the figures are two handed and vaijayanti is shown in the front. The figure below the fish carries a pot in her left hand over her shoulder and the right hand is akimbo. The figure above the tail of the fish carries a pot in her right hand in the posture similar to the one below and her left hand is akimbo. Kalpana Desai has identified them as attendant figures³⁰. Sethi on the other hand has identified the figure below as Lakshmī and the other figure as that of the donor³¹. He has evidently confused it with the description of the image in the Philadelphia Museum as given



Plate-III

by Stella Kramrisch for he calls the figure above as "skirted female figure" whereas the image under discussion is shown wearing a sari. Both the identifications are far from satisfactory. The first figure cannot be identified as that of Lakshmī for she is not carrying any lotus in her hands. Further she is not known to have a pot over her shoulder. On the other hand we have numerous examples of the river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā being depicted on either side of a deity. They invariably carry pots over their shoulders in one of their hands. Though their vehicles crocodile and tortoise are not shown here yet there are well-known examples in which they have been shown standing on lotus. For instance, the images of the river goddesses at the entrance of the Viśvesvara Mahādeva temple at Bajaura in Kullu are shown standing on lotus. Since all the figures in the image are placed



Plate-IV

on lotus which is symbolic of 'the place of birth out of the waters' the depiction of the river goddesses in this manner is very natural.

Another similar image of Matsya avatāra has been brought to notice by S. M. Sethi and Hari Chauhan from a slab enshrined in the Banlingeshvar temple (Plate IV) located on the outskirts of Chamba³². The image

which belongs to circa 11th-12th century CE is in bad state of preservation. It depicts the same features as contained in the image discussed above. The fish in diagonal posture is supported on a lotus with stem. In the centre rises a pillar on which the image of single headed Brahmā is carved with the images of the four Vedas flanking on his sides. The semi-divine musicians playing within the lotus scrolls is shown at the bottom. Two female figures, one below the mouth of the fish and the other above its tail are shown. They have been described as seated on lotus stems and identified as Bhū-Devī and Lakshmī respectively³³. However, a careful examination shows that both the figures are standing on lotus pedestals and are carrying pots over their shoulders in the similar manner as in the image described above. Since the iconography of these figures does not tally with that of Bhū-Devī and Lakshmī it is not possible to concur with the proposed identifications. They clearly depict the images of the river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā and are in complete consonance of the scene depicted in the image. Actually it goes to the credit of the Chamba artists to create these images with the ideas that present novelty within the prescribed limitations of the Brahmanical iconography*.

Notes:

- 1 I.154.1-6
- 2 I.155.6.
- 3 I.155.6.
- 4 For different types of incarnations of Viṣṇu such as avatāra, āveśa and aṃśa see T. A. Gopinatha Rao (1985), pp. 119-20.
- 5 I.3. also Matsya Purāṇa, 47. 234-263.
- 6 Cf. R. N. Prasher, 'Daśāvatāra: An Allegory of Evolution', Research Bulletin VVRI, I, 2002, pp. 139-147. The interpretation of the ninth incarnation as intellectual/philosopher is ours. Prasher associates it with the development of vegetarianism.
- 7 Matsya Purāṇa, I.18-35 and II.3-21.
- 8 Chapter II.
- 9 Canto VIII, Chapter 24.
- 10 XIX, 39.8.
- 11 I.8.1.
- 12 VII, 1.5.
- 13 For details see O. P. Bharadwaj (1986), pp. 1-7.
- 14 Vanaparva, 187.
- 15 It may not be mere coincidence that in Indian mythology Prajāpati Brahmā is said to have born from the umbilical cord emerging from the navel of Viṣṇu Śeṣhaśāyī sleeping in the eternal waters of the ocean. He is invariably shown seated on a lotus with a stalk emerging

from Vishnu's navel.

- 16 Chapters 178 and 75; Pratimālakṣhaṇa, 85.59.
- 17 Balaram Srivastava (1970), p. 139.
- 18 Cf. R. D. Banerji, ASIAR, 1924-25, p. 154, Pl. XL b; R. C. Kak, Antiquities of Basohli and Ramnagar, Indian Art and Letters, VII, 1933, p. 79, Pl. VIII.
- 19 Kramrisch, Stella (1960), p. 102, Pl. 48. The image has also been noted by Kalpana Desai without any new interpretation of its details (1973), p. 64.
- 20 Bhāgavata, VIII.24.33-34.
- 21 Kramrisch has described it as "undulations of the wave design" *ibid.*
- 22 *Ibid.*
- 23 Desai, Kalpana (1973), p. 64.
24. VIII.24.
- 25 *Op. cit.*, p. 64, fig. 53.
- 26 Sethi, S. M. (2002), p. 119-20, Pl. 72.
- 27 *Ibid.*
- 28 Sethi, S. M. and Hari Chauhan (2009), p. 127.
- 29 Rūpamaṇḍana, 2.7.
- 30 *Op. cit.*, p. 64.
- 31 Sethi, S. M. (2002), p. 120.
- 32 Sethi, S. M. and Hari Chauhan (2009), p. 86, Pl. 46.
- 33 *Ibid.*

- Plate I is from Stella Kramrisch, Plates II & III are from the photograph provided by my pupil Prof. Amit Sharma, Plate IV is from S. M. Sethi and Hari Chauhan (2009). The author acknowledges his gratitude for these photographs.

Reference:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Banerjea, J. N. | (1941) The Development of Hindu Iconography, University of Calcutta, Calcutta. |
| Bhāgavata Purāṇa | (V. S. 1997) Srimad Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Gita Press, Gorakhpur. |
| Bharadwaj, O. P. | (1986) Studies in the Historical Geography of Ancient India, Sundeep, Delhi. |
| Bhattacharyya, D. C. | (1991) Pratimalaksana of the Visnudharmottara, Harman, New Delhi. |
| Desai, Kalpana | (1973) Iconography of Visnu (In Northern India up to the Medieval Period), Abhinav, New Delhi. |
| Kramrisch, Stella | (1960) Indian Sculpture in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia. |
| Mahābhārata | (V. S. 2063) Gita Press, Gorakhpur. |

- Matsya Purāṇa
Ohri, V. C. (1984) Matsya Purāṇa, Part-I, Gita Press, Gorakhpur.
- Ram Gopal
Rao, T. A. Gopinatha (1991) Sculpture of the Western Himalayas (History and Stylistic Development), Agam Kala Prakashan, Delhi.
- Sethi, S. M. (2007) The Rgveda, Vol. II, VVRI, Hoshiarpur.
- Sethi, S. M. &
Hari Chauhan (1985) Elements of Hindu Iconography, Vol. I, Part I, 2nd Edition, Motilal Banarsi Dass, Delhi.
- Srivastava, Balaram (2002) A Catalogue of the Stone Sculptures in the Museums of Himachal Pradesh, Himachal State Museum, Shimla.
- (2009) Temple Art of Chamba Stone Temples, Sculptures and Fountain Slabs, Indus, New Delhi.
- (1970) [Ed.] Rupamandana, Motilal Banarsi Dass, Varanasi.

An Adorsed Image from State Museum Shimla: A Re-appraisal

Amit Sharma*

Garuḍa or Garutmān is mentioned as Vihaṅgama and Amṛtahaṛaṇa as the ninth and eighteenth incarnation amongst the thirty nine incarnations of the god, mentioned in the Sātvata list. In the Ṛigveda Garuḍa is described as having beautiful wings¹. In the epics and Purāṇas Garuḍa's other names are Suparṇa and Tarkasya. He is also known as Vainteya². He is also mentioned as bhujagāri, pannagāśana, pannagabhojana, etc. because of his enmity with the Nāgas.

In Hindu pantheon most of the major gods and goddesses are shown with their vehicles e.g. Siva with his bull Nandi, Brahmā with swan, Indra with elephant Airāvata, Lakshmī with owl, etc. Similarly Garuḍa is the bird vehicle of Viṣṇu. These vehicles are important part of iconography of these gods and goddesses. The mention of Garuḍa is found in various scriptures. In the Ādiparva of the Mahābhārata the story of Garuḍa is explained in detail³.

It is stated in this text that Kadru and Vinatā were two daughters of Dakṣa prajāpati. They were married to sage Kaśyapa who granted them the boon to have children of their desire. Kadru asked for thousand resplendent Naga sons and Vinatā asked only for two sons better than Kadru's. After five hundred years Kadru gave birth to her thousand sons but Vinatā's children did not come out of their eggs. Out of curiosity and impatience Vinatā broke one egg. At this, the half developed child cursed Vinatā that because she acted in haste she will be slave to Kadru for five hundred years. If she does not break the second egg and waits for another five hundred years then the child born from the second egg will save her from this curse. Having thus said, the child flew into the sky and became the chariot driver of the sun. Ruddiness in the morning rays is reflection of him. That boy was named as Arūṇa. Once Kadru and Vinatā both sisters saw a horse named as Uchhaiṣravā. On seeing the horse Kadru asked Vinatā of which colour the horse is. She replied, white colour. On this Kadru said it is of white colour but its tail is of black colour and if it is so you will become my slave and otherwise I'll remain yours. To this they both agreed. Next day Kadru connived with her sons and proved Vinatā wrong as Kadru's Nāga sons gave the illusion of black tail by embracing the horse's tail as hair. As the time came, the extremely resplendent Garuḍa came out of the egg. He was extremely powerful, swift and grew at a rapid pace. His eyes were yellow like lightning and body resplendent like Agni. On seeing him Agni, gods and sages extolled him. Once Vinatā was sitting along with her son, Kadru asked her to take her to

*Teacher fellow, Panjab University

a place occupied by Nāgas deep in to the sea. At this Garuḍa lifted all the Nāgas on his back and took all of them to that place. But out of anxiety, Garuḍa asked his mother the reason behind her servitude. Vinatā explained the situation to Garuḍa. At this Garuḍa asked Nāgas the way out so that he and his mother could get free from their slavery. The Nāgas expressed their desire for ambrosia in lieu of granting freedom. Upon this Garuḍa set out to get the ambrosia. On his way he ate a tortoise and an elephant named Vibhāvasu and Supratīka in their past births. On reaching heaven Garuḍa vanquished the gods and made them flee. Garuḍa saw fire around ambrosia and extended his faces to eight thousand and one hundred to drink and then regurgitate water to douse the fire. Thereafter, he reduced himself in size and proceeded. After successfully overcoming all the odds, Garuḍa got the pot of ambrosia. However, he did not taste the ambrosia. On seeing his lack of interest in tasting the ambrosia, lord Viṣṇu was pleased and asked him to ask for a boon. Garuḍa asked for a place in his banner and asked for immortality without partaking the ambrosia. In return Garuḍa also offered to grant a boon to Lord Viṣṇu upon which Lord invited Garuḍa to be his vehicle. He was given the name Suparṇa after he let one of his feather fall down, when attacked by the vajra of Indra. At this astonishing feat of Garuḍa, Indra offered his friendship to him and granted a boon. Garuḍa on remembering the pain meted out to his mother by the Nāgas, wanted from Indra that these Nāgas may become his food. Before the Nāgas could taste the ambrosia the pot was taken away by Indra. The snakes became split tongued as they tried to satisfy themselves by licking the Kuśa grass on which the pot of ambrosia was kept. That incident onwards Kuśa grass was deemed sacred. In the Padma-Purāṇa, it is referred to as that when Prithu became the king of the entire earth, at that time Brahmā made Viṣṇu, the Lord of the Ādityas and Garuḍa, the Lord of the Birds⁴.

The earliest depictions of Garuḍa in art were in the form of a gigantic bird akin to a parrot. There is an image on the inner side of the middle architrave of the eastern gateway of Sanchi. In this relief sculpture different animals are paying their obeisance to the Buddha symbolised in the form of Bodhidruma. In the right corner of the relief sculpture is depicted a big parrot like bird along with a five headed snake. It was the archetype for the iconography of Garuḍa⁵. Banerjea traces the development of the form of Garuḍa with the help of the Gupta coins as they represent the celestial bird on them. During the Gupta period, Garuḍa is shown standing with outspread wings but occasionally he is depicted with some novel features as having outspread wings and long human arms⁶. Lately Ellen M. Raven has discussed in detail, the various aspects of Gupta gold coins with depiction of Garuḍa on them⁷. This work throws some welcome light on this aspect.

Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa states that Tārksya's colour is like that of an emerald. He has the beak like that of a kite. His eyes should be roundish. He should be shown having four arms. His thighs, knees and feet should be made to resemble that of a vulture. He should have two wings. He should be shown holding umbrella and a pot of ambrosia in his two hands. The other two hands are in añjalī pose i.e. joined together. When Lord Viṣṇu is shown riding Garuḍa, his hands should not hold the umbrella and a vase. These two hands should support the feet of the Lord. He should be shown pot bellied and adorned with all ornaments. His earrings should be of the shape of a makara. Thus, the instructions for making the image of Garuḍa are enjoined⁸. It is also mentioned in the Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa that mind should be known as Garuḍa who resides in all the sentient beings. Therefore, swiftness and power of mind is without equal⁹. The Śilparatna and the Śrī-tatva-nidhī also give description of Garuḍa. The Śilparatna gives two different kinds of description of the mount of the Lord Viṣṇu. In one description, the image should be in golden yellow colour from feet to the knees, snow white from knees to the navel, scarlet from navel to the neck and jet black from neck to the head, the eyes yellow whereas, beak blue. There should be terrific look in his eyes¹⁰. He should be shown two handed one of which should be in abhaya mudrā. The second description mentions eight armed Garuḍa having pot of nectar, the Gadhā, the Śankha, the chakra, the sword and a snake. Mention of the objects in the other two hands is not made. Description in the Śrī-tatva-nidhī mentions Garuḍa kneeling on his left knee. He should have stout knees and legs and his crown should be adorned with snakes. He should have face and body of a human with raised and pointed nose. He should have two hands held in añjalī mudrā.

There are numerous images of Garuḍa found from Himachal Pradesh. Some of these are in situ and the others are in the collections of various museums. Some of these images of Garuḍa are independent and others are shown carrying Lord Viṣṇu on his back or the celestial bird is shown as an attendant figure flanking the deity. Representation of Garuḍa as vehicle of Viṣṇu is found in numerous sculptures from Himachal Pradesh. Garuḍa is generally depicted two handed or four handed, however, six or eight handed images are also found, holding attributes associated with him such as parasol, snake, pot of ambrosia, etc. He is also shown supporting feet of Viṣṇu and Lakshmī. He is depicted in anthropomorphic or semi anthropomorphic form. There are some images in which he is depicted completely in human form. In some other images his legs are avian and rest of the body is human. Sometimes, he is depicted with wings at his back. The independent Garuḍa figures are very few from Himachal Pradesh.

A sculpture depicting addorsed figures, discovered from Bajaura, District Kullu is now housed in the State Museum, Shimla. The male figure standing on one side (plate 1.) is depicted against the circular background. It is two handed image with his hands joined in front of his chest holding an indistinct object, probably a pot. His shoulders are round and muscular. Face is damaged, however, it seems to be modelled in round. Besides the hair tied in a bun atop his head, some gracefully fall on his shoulders in curls. He is wearing necklace, armlets, anklets, dhoti, a cloth tied around his thighs etc. A cloth hangs, probably *uttariya*, down beneath his elbows. Both his hands join in front of the chest. His hands are partially damaged. Spoke like shafts emanate from behind the



Plate-I

figure. They do not emanate from the centre as is evident from the spoke like shafts below shoulder and the ones which emanate from behind his head. The position of the figure is frontal. The figure below knees is not there.



Plate-II

The male figure on the other side (plate 2.) is almost identical with the hands joined

in front of the chest in reverence and he seems to be standing in samabhaṅga posture. However, his legs below knees are not there. The background to which he is attached is circular. The spoke like shafts at the back, do not seem to meet the centre, especially the ones below the shoulders and behind the head. His hands are close to chest and he seems to be holding something in his hands which cannot be discerned. He is wearing necklace, earrings, broad armlets, bracelets and dhoti. The figure has thick thighs which are avian in appearance. His hair gracefully falls on his shoulders. On the top of his head his hair is tied in a bun. A cloth is tied around his thighs and below his elbows the ends of his uttarīya can be seen falling down. The chest of the figure is broad and shoulders strong and eyes are large and arched. The hair on this image looks like a wig. This addorsed image must have been capital of a pillar installed in front of a Viṣṇu temple.

According to V.C. Ohri, in this sculpture two addorsed figures of chakrapurusha are depicted in añjalī mudrā and chakra (wheel type formation) is shown in between them. According to him, this image is different from the figures of Garuḍa or Chakrapurusha seen at Eran, Madhya Pradesh, most probably because of the dictates of the material available here. According to him the spokes of the chakra are marked only by deep cutting. The portion below the legs was attached separately as seen in other images of this type elsewhere in northern India. According to Ohri this sculpture was used as a capital of the pillar, most probably placed in front of a Vaiṣṇava temple. The sculpture can be assigned to 6th century CE according to him, when architecture in stone of the nāgara type was not fully developed. Therefore, the dhvajā being the structural work could have been built quite high. Another purpose of the pillar according to him was to make it visible to weary travellers, beckoning them to the place as larger number of visitors and travellers would bring prosperity to the place. According to him, the simplification of the modelling of the figures and their serene and expressive features are in the sculptural tradition of the North Indian plain of the Gupta period. Also the hair falling on the shoulders shows the sculptural tradition of northern India of that time. According to him, the contemporary image of Viṣṇu and the temple in which it was housed has not survived and Viṣṇu-Viśvarūpa and Viṣṇu-chaturmūrtī from the same place appear to be one or two centuries later¹¹.

According to S.M. Sethi¹², this image represents Chakrapurusha as an independent image of personified āyudha of Viṣṇu and stands in añjalībaddha-mudrā in front of a wheel surrounding his whole body. According to him, the wheel at the back has twenty three spokes and the hair of the Chakrapurusha is piled up in a top knot like that of an ascetic with loose hair falling on the shoulders. He also mentions the reverse side of

the image, which is also conceived in the form of a wheel halo with the similar figure emanating from it. S. M. Sethi refers to the *Ahīrbudhanya Saṃhitā* and *Skaṇḍa-Purāṇa* to suggest that Chakrapurusha was deemed equal to Viṣṇu and its worship was suggested in these texts. Sethi keeps the image in the c 7th century CE. Shanti Lal Nagar mentions this image as Garuḍa¹³ from Gupta period. However, he gives wrong provenance of the sculpture, according to him this image is discovered from Chamba¹⁴.

R.C. Agrawala refers to this image as Chakrapurusha¹⁵. According to him this image is depicted at the back of the Viśvarūpa image of Viṣṇu from Bajaura, Kullu. He describes this image of Chakrapurusha as appearing against a spoked wheel in halo with folded hands. However, R.C. Agrawala is not right in saying that this image is depicted at the back of the Viśvarūpa image of Viṣṇu and also he failed to mention that it is an addorsed image.

Among the other features of these images the position of the hands needs to be looked at very carefully. According to both V.C. Ohri and S.M. Sethi, the hands of figures on both the sides are in *anjālī-mudrā*. They do not make any other observation about the hands which seem to be joined in front of the chest in reverence. Both the scholars fail to take into account that the hands of the figures on both the sides flare upwards as if holding some object in their hands. However, the hands are partially damaged making it difficult to ascertain the object. Generally in this position *kalaśa* or cup is held, if it is so then these figures cannot be the representations of Chakrapurusha. These figures are not wearing any headgear. Their hair is tied in a bun atop the head. Invariably, Chakrapurusha is depicted with crown on the top of his head and Garuḍa is depicted with tiara, round flat headgear or hair tied in a bun atop the head. This feature corroborates the point that these figures cannot be the depiction of Chakrapurusha. The spokes of the wheel at the back do not emanate from the centre and the point that the legs of the figure (plate 2.) are avian¹⁶ clinches the argument that these figures represent Garuḍa. Also the addorsed figures of Garuḍa are seen from Bhitri¹⁷, near Varanasi and on the pillar capital from Eran, Madhya Pradesh. In the light of the above argument it can be gauged that the addorsed figure from Bajaura represents Garuḍa and not the Chakrapurusha.

References:

1. Divyah sa suparṇo garutmān Ṛig Veda. I. 164, 46
2. Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva, chapter 15
3. Ibid, Ādi Parva, chapter 3, 5, 6, 7
4. Padma Purāṇa, chapter 8
5. Banerjea, Jitendra Nath, The Development of Hindu Iconography, New Delhi reprint. 2002, pp. 530-531

6. Ibid, p. 532
7. Raven. M Ellen, Gupta Gold Coins With a Garuḍa -Banner, Vol. I-II, Groningen 1994
8. Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa, chapter 54, verse 1-9
9. Manastu Garuḍo jñeyah sarvabhūtaśarīragama
Tasmāchīghrataram nāsti tathaiva balavattarama
Ibid, chapter 47, verse 7
10. This is seen In the Garuḍa images from Kashmir and images from Himachal bearing
Kashmir idiom
11. Ohri, V.C., Sculpture of Western Himalayas, Delhi 1991, p. 33
12. Sethi, S.M., A Catalogue of Stone Sculpture in the Museum of Himachal Pradesh, Shimla
2002, pp. 29-30
13. Though no details have been provided by S.L. Nagar who has included it in his book
Garuḍa the Celestial
Bird but in the Photograph of this image published by him, he has rightly labeled it as
Garuḍa.
14. Nagar, S.L., Garuḍa the Celestial Bird, Delhi 1992, p. 181, plate 49.
15. R.C. Agrawala, Nṛsiṃha-Varāha-Viṣṇu Images and some Allied Problems, Lalit Kala,
No. 16, 1974, p. 18.,
Plate III, Fig. 9.
16. I am thankful to Professor Ashivini Agrawal for drawing my attention to this detail.
17. I am thankful to Professor Ashivini Agrawal for bringing this image to my notice.

Manimahesh, Journal of Himalayan Studies

Manimahesh, Journal of Himalayan studies is published yearly

Special feature: Articles on history, art, archaeology, culture, sociology, anthropology and environment ecology are the some of the special features of this journal

Contributor to Note:

1. Article should not exceed 4000 words and with maximum five illustrations. The article may be submitted in hard and soft copy in MS words format only with 1.5 line spacing. You can also submit your article via e-mail to statemuseumshimla@yahoo.com.
2. Figures for the journal should be submitted as high-quality JPG files. Resolutions must be 72dpi or higher and image dimensions should be 800 × 600 pixels or higher. Images can be cropped to exclude extraneous content, but please do not reduce the image in size — the submitted image should be as big as possible.
3. Manuscripts should be structured as follows:
 - i) Article title
 - ii) Author's names and contact details for publication
 - iii) Text (DO NOT include an abstract)
 - iv) Acknowledgments
 - v) References
 - vi) Figure captions
 - vii) Use only end note

Annual subscription

Institute/ organization	Rs. 350-00
Individual	Rs. 250-00
Student	Rs. 150-00

Subscription is always payable in advance. Subscription and article may be sent to :

**Curator,
Himachal State Museum
Shimla-171004(H.P)
e-mail: statemuseumshimla@yahoo.com**



Tabo Monastery, 10th century (ASI Protected Monument)-Spiti